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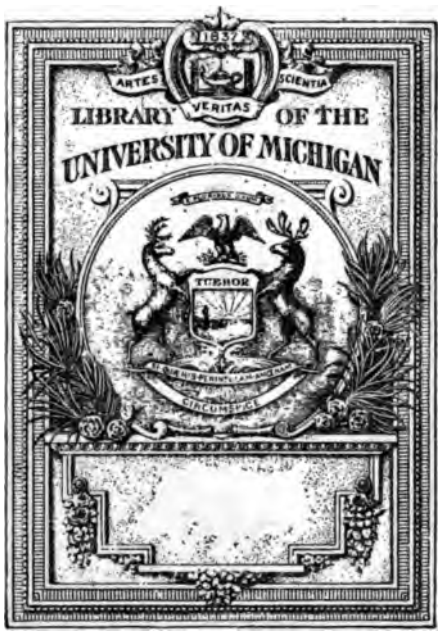
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THE POSTHUMOUS WORKS OF
ALGERNON CHARLES SWINBURNE

POSTHUMOUS POEMS

POSTHUMOUS POEMS

By

Algernon Charles Swinburne



Edited by Edmund Gosse, C.B.
and Thomas James Wise

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PREFACE

THE poems which, with the help of Mr. Thos. J. Wise, I have endeavoured in the following pages to present, as far as possible, in chronological sequence, belong to the whole range of Swinburne's career as an author. The earliest was composed in 1857, the latest is dated 1907, and accordingly they cover, in their rapid and fluctuating passage, exactly half a century. Various circumstances, some of which will presently be told, though the majority have doubtless ceased to be discoverable, led to their being suppressed or forgotten, but none of them were destroyed by the poet, and of none of them have we found any evidence that he wished for their destruction. The only exception is the unsuccessful prize poem of 1858. This, there is reason to believe, Swinburne did wish, in the exasperation of disappointment, to wipe out of existence. But his father's care in concealing this innocent from the massacre of his son's juvenile verses, was justified by the merit of so remarkable a poem, which, on historical and critical grounds alike, we have determined to

restore. There passed into our hands also other pieces which we have reason to believe the poet wished to suppress, or on mature reflection would have so wished. These we have not printed. Our desire has been to be loyal to his memory, and we are here giving to the world nothing but what we believe that he would consent to give if he could direct our conduct.

The principal exception to the chronological arrangement adopted in this volume is the placing at the forefront of the book the eleven border ballads which Mr. Wise was so fortunate as to discover among the MSS. which he bought in 1909 from Watts-Dunton.[1] The rough drafts of these ballads were found among MSS. of the years 1862 and 1863, and the character of the handwriting, as well as of the paper, leads us to believe that they belong to this period. With them were found several of the ballads published at last in the *Third Series of Poems and Ballads* (1889) but provisionally set up in type in 1877. There is no doubt that Swinburne hesitated long as to whether he should give to the public any of his more primitive border ballads. At an early age he had been attracted to this class of poetry by the study of Scott's *Border Minstrelsy* of 1802-3, an examination of which

[1] We owe the communication of a MS. of *Wearieswd* to the kindness of Mr. Sydney C. Cockerell.

will show that it contains, then published for the first time, all the ballads which most powerfully affected Swinburne's imagination. "Kinmont Willie," "The Lament of the Border Widow," "Johnnie of Braidislee," and a dozen others which peculiarly attracted Swinburne were unknown until Scott printed them in the *Border Minstrelsy*.

But that invaluable miscellany also contained a large number of "Imitations," towards which Scott was only a little less lenient than had been Percy and the other editors of the eighteenth century. Both Leyden and Scott, who did so much to enlarge and to ensure our knowledge of ballad literature, continued to believe the true border *volkslied* to be a thing too rough for direct imitation. Modern ballads were defined by Sir Walter Scott as "supposed capable of uniting the vigorous numbers and wild fiction, which occasionally charm us in the ancient ballad, with a greater equality of versification, and elegance of sentiment, than we can expect to find in the works of a rude age." The conviction that the original ballads were barbarous productions, without art or skill of any kind, but agreeable only when polished and improved, went so far and so late that even in 1859 Robert Chambers, a very thoughtful and practised critic of their text, started the theory that all the

romantic Scottish ballads had enjoyed revision by Elizabeth, Lady Wardlaw, about the year 1700. This was absurd, and the best critics perceived the fascinating beauty of texts which were manifestly antique. But still the notion persisted that a "modern" ballad must be neater, smoother and less savage than a genuine product of the old Northumbrian border.

It is doubtless to this prejudice, which was still universal sixty years ago, that we owe the fact that Swinburne's best border ballads have remained unpublished to this day. In 1862, which is the date to which we attribute "Lord Soulis" and "Lord Scales," Swinburne was in the constant society of Dante Gabriel Rossetti, to whose judgment he appealed on every occasion, and to whom all his poems were recited directly they were composed. Rossetti himself was greatly interested in resuscitating this form of lyric, and in "Stratton Water" we have an example of his success in composing an "imitation" ballad of real merit. With this may be compared Swinburne's own "We were ten maidens in the green corn" and "Stand up, stand up, thou Mary Janet" of the volume of 1866. In these published ballads of Rossetti and Swinburne a great deal of the simplicity of the originals is preserved, but there is a literary preoccupation, and something of what Sir Walter

Scott meant by "elegance of sentiment." It seems to be certain that the ballads of Swinburne which we print in this collection, were regarded by Rossetti, and probably by Morris also, as too rough and bare for publication, and that only such as possessed a pre-Raphaelite colouring or costume were permitted to pass the ordeal. But Swinburne persisted in his private conviction that a kind of poetry much closer to the old rievers' and freebooters' loosely-jointed and rambling folk-poems might be attempted, and he carefully preserved the ballads which we have the privilege of publishing to-day. There can be little doubt that in such rugged pieces as "The Worm of Spindlestonheugh" and "Duriesdyke," the aboriginal Northumbrian accent is more closely reproduced than in any other "imitation" border ballad.

With regard to Swinburne's unequalled skill in reproducing the texture of style, a craft of which he has left a wide range of examples, Mr. Sydney C. Cockerell tells me that William Morris, when he was dying, started making a selection of border ballads, which he declared were the finest poems in the English language, to be printed at the Kelmscott Press. The difficulties of gaps and various readings were too great for Morris in his enfeebled condition, and Mr. Cockerell suggested that the editing should

be handed over to Swinburne. "Oh, no!" answered Morris, "that would never do. He would be writing-in verses that no one would be able to tell from the original stuff!" The ballads we publish to-day will show the complete justice of Morris's remark.

There is not much to be said with regard to the individual ballads or their sources in history. So far as can be discovered, no ancient ballad of "Lord Soulis" exists, but the hero, in whose legend Sir Walter Scott took a vivid interest, was a historical personage. The family name recurs frequently in the records of Scottish charters granted during the fourteenth century, and we are told that William, Lord Soulis, was one of the most powerful barons in the south-west of Scotland. He was of royal descent, and in pursuance of his claim to the Scottish throne, he conspired against Robert the Bruce. This plot was discovered by the acuteness of Lady Strathern. Lord Soulis was arrested at the head of a troop at Berwick in 1320, and, his life being spared by the King, his estates were forfeited and he was secretly confined for the rest of his years in the royal castle of Dumbarton. Probably owing to his disappearance, a legend grew up that Lord Soulis had been ignominiously executed with the King's connivance, and it was generally believed that he had been boiled to

death within the Druid circle of Nine-Stone-Rig, which overlooks and slopes down to the Water of Hermitage. The cauldron in which the unfortunate Soulis was said to have been sodden was long exhibited to the credulous in Liddesdale.

What foundation there may have been for the popular belief that Lord Soulis was a wizard, and held communion with evil spirits, it is now hopeless to conjecture. John Leyden (1775-1811) put together all the rumours which he could collect in the rambling poem of "Lord Soulis" which he wrote about 1801, and which Scott afterwards annotated. Leyden caught something of the true ballad note, and he had the advantage of being himself a borderer, the descendant of small farmers long settled in Teviotdale.

Swinburne's ballad follows Leyden's in no respect, except in the indispensable particular of the boiling of Lord Soulis as a wizard. The three fair mays and the raiding of Eastness and Westness appear to be Swinburne's invention, but they follow exactly the ancient type of border minstrelsy. Everything which regarded the castle of Hermitage was romantically precious to this latest lover of Mary Queen of Scots.

What led Swinburne to the story of "Lord Scales" it is not easy to conjecture. A barony

of Scales was founded in 1299, and continued to exist until 1460, when the seventh and last Lord Scales, who had been a great enemy of the common people and a supporter of Henry IV against Jack Cade at home and the Normans abroad, is said to have been murdered. The barony then fell into abeyance. But these Scaleses were a Herefordshire family, and had no special border reputation. If Swinburne intended to describe Robert, first Lord Scales, that worthy, who died in 1305, had been most active in France. The ballad of "Lord Scales" has nothing to do with the universal poison-ballad of Lord Randal. Nor has "Earl Robert" any connection with the ballad-hero whose mother poisons him because he has married Mary Florence against the mother's will. This is an instance in which Swinburne has retold a well-known ballad-legend; there are four versions of the story in Motherwell, and they all differ from Swinburne's.

But a special interest attaches to "The Worm of Spindlestonheugh," where we find Swinburne attempting to reconstruct the lost work of a real Northumbrian minstrel. There is known to have existed an authentic ballad of "The Laidley Worm of Spindlestoneheugh." When Hutchinson was writing his *History of Northumberland* in 1768, a local clergyman, the Rev-

erend Robert Lamb, of Norham, communicated to him a ballad with that title, which Hutchinson printed in 1776. It has long been admitted that this was a forgery, although Lamb pretended to have copied it "from an ancient manuscript," and attributed it to an unknown mediæval poet, Duncan Frasier. But there have been reported other ballads on the same subject, and it is now generally admitted that there existed, and still survived near the end of the eighteenth century, a genuine ancient ballad of "The Worm of Spindlestoneheugh." It was, moreover, the opinion of Professor Child that Lamb must have woven into his forgery a good many strands of the lost original.

Between these fragments and imitations, and Swinburne's spirited poem, there is practically no resemblance, except in the conventional description of the Worm, or fire-drake, the tradition of which seems to have been widely diffused. In the genuine ballad of "The Hagg Worm," we read—

> "Word's gone east, and word's gone west,
> And word's gane over the sea,—
> There's a laidler worm in Spindlestoneheughs
> Will destroy the North Countree."

The metamorphosis of a beautiful maiden into a snake, dragon or "worm," the *Schlangenjungfrau* of Icelandic saga and Teutonic legend,

is broadly disseminated. It is the subject of such famous primitive ballads as "Kemp Owyne" (or "Kempion") and "The Machrel of the Sea." Swinburne is seen here in the act of composing, on this familiar theme, a ballad in which no modern or "elegant" touch should distract a reader from believing that this was the genuine poem which is known to have once existed in connection with Bamborough Castle. The distinction between this design, and that which led Swinburne to compose the more or less pre-Raphaelite ballads of the volume of 1866, does not require emphatic statement.

The *Ode to Mazzini* was found after Swinburne's death, in an old copy-book, from which many leaves had already been torn, presumably by himself. Perhaps the removal of these loosened a page of the *Ode to Mazzini,* containing the close of Strophe IV and the whole of Strophe V, for these, unfortunately, have disappeared. From this imperfect text Mr. T. J. Wise privately printed the *Ode to Mazzini,* in November 1909, in an edition of only twenty copies. In 1916, however, another copy of the MS. was bequeathed by Miss Isabel Swinburne to the British Museum, which, besides giving the missing strophes, supplied several minor corrections. It had the appearance of being copied a good deal later, perhaps in a moment of revived in-

terest about 1860. This second MS. has been followed in the present text.

It may be well to point out that at the time he wrote, and for long years to come, Swinburne seems to have had no personal knowledge of Mazzini. But he followed with ardent sympathy the propaganda of the friends of Young Italy in London, at the head of whose executive council stood the inspiring name of Walter Savage Landor.

The original MSS. contain no indication of date, and the generally rhetorical character of the poetry makes it at first sight impossible to obtain any such term. But on a close examination, one point after another becomes luminous, and we can at length, with almost perfect confidence, date the composition of this ode within a few months. The first salient observation which the reader makes is concerned with Strophe XVII, in which we learn that Poerio was still a prisoner when it was written. But Baron Carlo Poerio—whose case had been, in 1851, so eloquently brought before the English public by Gladstone, in his letters to Lord Aberdeen—was released from his prison on the "foul wild rocks" of the island of Nisida in December 1858. This fact was widely known in England, and Swinburne would certainly have learned it. Moreover, had the ode been

written subsequent to January 1858, it could not but have contained some reference to the attempt of Orsini, which so greatly embarrassed the action of Mazzini and rendered the policy of Sardinia so difficult, besides thrilling Swinburne to the depths of his being.

Everything, on the other hand, points to 1857 as the year in which this ode was composed. Strophe VII, with its strange reference to the "priestly hunters," and the close of Strophe IX, are intelligible only in reference to Cavour's attempts to encourage the Papacy in its efforts, half-hearted enough, to check the violence of Austria and the guilt of Naples. In this connection, the reader of to-day may be surprised to find no acknowledgment of the services of the great "regenerator of Italy." But Swinburne, all through life, was unjust to Cavour, because of his monarchical tendencies, as were at that moment the leaders of "Young Italy," with Mazzini himself at their head. It is observable that the notion of the one and indivisible Republic, which pervades and animates *Songs before Sunrise* from beginning to end, is not suggested in the *Ode to Mazzini*. Swinburne had not yet accepted such an idea; in 1857 his own boyish hopes were bounded, as were the more adult desires of Mazzini, by the frontiers of Italy.

The moment when the ode was written must have been early in 1857. Sardinia was provoking Austria to a violent act, so as to make war inevitable: the house of Naples was filling the cup of its iniquities; "out of a court alive with creeping things" the stiletto of Agesilao Milano had flashed on the 8th of December, 1856, but had failed to slay the detestable Bomba, a disappointment obscurely referred to in the latter part of Strophe XIII. On the 16th of March, 1857, Vienna could bear no longer the violent attacks of the Italian Press on Austrian tyranny in Lombardy, and the Ambassador withdrew from Turin. Mazzini immediately left London, where he had resided since he fled from Rome, and descended once more upon Italy. He found that distraction was rife among the friends of the Republic, and that hope was dying out, "like a forgotten tale." It was at this moment, almost without question, that Swinburne composed his *Ode to Mazzini,* in the hour of suspense. The careful reader will not fail to observe that the poet has not yet heard of any acts which Mazzini has performed on the soil of Italy. Had the insurrections at Genoa (June 1857) and Leghorn occurred, or had the attack on Naples, led by Pisacane, Mazzini's friend, been made, the poet must have celebrated them in his verse.

Everything, then, tends to show that Swinburne composed this ode in the Spring of 1857. He was just twenty years of age, and this was, with all its puerile shortcomings, the most powerful and accomplished work which he had written up to that time. We are, therefore, met by the question: Why did he publish it neither then, nor later? For this an answer is readily forthcoming. In 1857 he had no means of publishing anything, except the slight and imitative verses which he presently contributed to *Undergraduate Papers*. For that ephemeral periodical, the *Ode to Mazzini* was eminently unfitted. But the tide of history was running fast, and the lyric visions of 1857 were soon left high and dry on the shore of time. After the diplomatic isolation of Austria in 1858, after the war ending with the Peace of Villafranca in July 1859, after the death of Bomba and the capture of the Two Sicilies by Garibaldi in 1860, Swinburne's wild and vague aspirations became hopelessly old-fashioned. The interest of his ode was temporary, and its political purpose had ceased to exist.

Another reason why, when Swinburne became a prominent poet, he could not publish the *Ode to Mazzini,* may be found in its form. It is an irregular ode, of the Pindaresque sort, on the model which was invented by Cowley, and

constantly employed during the close of the seventeenth century, but repudiated, in a brilliant and learned essay, by Congreve, as founded on a total misconception of the laws of Pindar's prosody. Later, Swinburne perceived the falsity of the "Pindaresque" ode, and his mature poems are types of disciplined evolution. There were therefore reasons of various kinds, external and internal, why the *Ode to Mazzini,* if not printed soon after it was written, could not be printed by Swinburne at all.

Of Swinburne's undergraduate poems some other examples have been preserved, and will be found in the ensuing pages. In 1857 the subject given at Oxford for the Newdigate Prize was "The Temple of Janus." Both John Nichol and Swinburne were competitors, and each declared that the other was sure to be successful. It was, however, awarded to Philip Stanhope Worsley of Corpus (1835-1866), afterwards a distinguished translator of Homer. Swinburne and Nichol went to hear Worsley read his poem at Commemoration, and the late Mr. Pringle Nichol obliged me with this anecdote. The two unsuccessful poets were not indisposed to be critical, when Nichol, hearing the line—

"Stars in their courses fought the fight of Rome,"

whispered to his companion, "That's fine"; whereupon Swinburne snapped out, "Why, it's in the Bible!"

No trace has been found of "The Temple of Janus," but the following year Swinburne again tried for the Newdigate. The subject given for the Prize Poem, to be awarded in March 1858, was "The Discovery of the North-West Passage." At this date, the loss of Franklin and his companions was universally accepted, although it was not until May 1859 that McClintock discovered the memorandum proving the death of Franklin to have taken place on the 11th of June, 1847. Swinburne's poem takes for granted that the whole party died together, but it is now known that the leader, by succumbing earlier, escaped the terrible sufferings of those who survived him. Swinburne's verses eloquently transcribe the general sentiment which prevailed all over the world until the return of the *Fox* in 1859.

In late years, Swinburne was never known to make the slightest reference to the fact that he had entered the lists again, and this time without the support or rivalry of Nichol. His disappointment at failure—for the prize was awarded to a Mr. Francis Low Latham, of Brazenose College—must have been acute. Lord Bryce remembers that the Old Mortality were indig-

nant at Swinburne's not being the winner, from which it seems likely that he read his poem to the members of the club. He certainly read it to Stubbs, who considered his success more than probable. We cannot but be astonished that the judges were not struck by the extraordinary merits of the poem, by its melody, by its high strain of feeling, by its patriotism and dignity. No successful Newdigate, we may believe, has ever excelled it in solid beauty since the foundation of the prize. But it is possible that the examiners did not even read it. By the will of Sir Roger Newdigate, the only permissible metre was the heroic couplet. Doubtless the metre of Swinburne's poem was considered irregular enough to make the poem ineligible.

Not very much requires to be said about the miscellaneous pieces. The paraphrase of *Dies Iræ* is very early, not later, certainly, than 1857. Possibly it was produced for the benefit of the Warden of Radley during one of Swinburne's visits to St. Peter's College. There exists a careful prose translation of the Latin poem, evidently of the same date, in Swinburne's handwriting. *King Ban* is a fragment from an attempt to put the early chapters of the *Morte d' Arthur* into blank verse. King Ban of Benwick and King Bors of Gaul were, it will be remembered, the two good kings who supported

Arthur and fought with him against Claudas and the Eleven Bad Kings. It is interesting to note that it was from precisely this section of the Arthurian epic that Swinburne took, long afterwards, *The Tale of Balen.*

"In the Twilight" was almost certainly written in October 1867, when Victor Emmanuel, acting under the advice of Ratazzi, had endeavoured to confine Garibaldi to his island. It was probably rejected from *Songs before Sunrise* on account of its similarity of subject and tone with "A Watch in the Night."

The greater part of the poems here published were hidden, unknown to Watts-Dunton, at the Pines. All round Swinburne's sitting-room there were discovered after his death unsightly rolls or parcels tied up in old newspaper, some of them looking as if they had not been opened for half a century. These parcels were found to contain proofs, bills, letters, prospectuses and every species of rubbish, together with occasional MSS. in prose and verse. On reflection, it became evident what they were. For many years Swinburne was in the habit of allowing miscellaneous material to gather on his table, until a moment came when he could bear the pressure of it no longer. He would then gather everything up, tie the whole in the current newspaper of the day, and then delicately place

it on a shelf, where it never was again disturbed. A fresh heap would then begin to grow, till the day when the poet suddenly pounced upon it, and doomed it to the recesses of another newspaper. Through a great part of his life, Swinburne seems to have carried out this curious plan, and in earlier days, when he wandered from lodging-house to lodging-house, he must always have carried with him his carpet-bag of newspaper parcels.

It took a very long time to sort out the contents of these packages, and to examine and verify the poems which seemed to be unfamiliar. In this laborious and delightful work Mr. Wise was kind enough to associate me from the first, since Watts-Dunton's interest in the matter had become entirely a financial one. At last, in the summer of 1913, we satisfied ourselves that no more early poetry of a nature fitted for publication would turn up, and we began to arrange the discovered pieces which are now at last given to the public.

There is a section of Swinburne's lyrical writing which has often been talked of, but will not at present escape our guardianship. Once, in the sixties, Jowett drove the poet home from a dinner, and some one asking the Master afterwards how Swinburne had behaved, Jowett answered with an indulgent smile, "O, he sang all the way,

—bad songs—very bad songs." The world is growing less and less censorious, and more and more willing to be amused. Perhaps a future editor, perhaps even we ourselves, may one day venture in this direction, but not yet.

EDMUND GOSSE.

May, 1917.

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BORDER BALLADS



LORD SOULIS

LORD SOULIS is a keen wizard,
A wizard mickle of lear:
Who cometh in bond of Lord Soulis,
Thereof he hath little cheer.

He has three braw castles to his hand,
That wizard mickle of age;
The first of Estness, the last of Westness,
The middle of Hermitage.

He has three fair mays into his hand,
The least is good to see;
The first is Annet, the second is Janet,
The third is Marjorie.

The firsten o' them has a gowden crown,
The neist has a gowden ring;
The third has sma' gowd her about,
She has a sweeter thing.

The firsten o' them has a rose fier on,
The neist has a marigold;
The third of them has a better flower,
The best that springeth ower wold.

The kisses that are her mouth within,
  There is no man knoweth of any one;
She is a pure maid of her body,
  The best that standeth under sun.

And Estness was a bonny castle,
  It stood upon a sea;
The green for Annet, the yellow for Janet,
  The brown for Marjorie.

And Westness was a bonny castle,
  It lay upon a lea;
Red wine for Annet, and white for Janet,
  And water for Marjorie.

But Hermitage is a fair castle,
  The fairest of the three;
Saft beds for Annet, silk sheets for Janet,
  Nane sheets for Marjorie.

He made them a' by strong cunning,
  That wizard great of hand;
The twain to fall at his life's ending,
  The third alway to stand.

He made them a' by hell's cunning,
  That wizard full of ill;
They burnt up Estness and cast down Westness,
  But Hermitage standeth still.

LORD SOULIS

There be twenty lords in that border,
Full twenty strong lords and three,
They have sworn an oath for Lord Soulis,
Weel wroken of him to be.

They have set a meeting at Emmethaugh,
And upon the Lilienshaw,
They will be wroken of Lord Soulis,
His body to hang and draw.

They have broken bread between them a'
At Ottershawe that's ower the lea,
They wad plunder Estness and harry Westness,
But Hermitage they let be.

They watered steeds by the wan Wellhaugh
Under the sweet leaves green;
Frae the Yethburn head to Christenbury,
To ride they were full keen.

When they were come to the Yethburn spait,
I wot their knees were wet;
When they were come to the Yethburn head,
There was no porter at tha yett.

When they had won to the Bloody-bush,
I wot their sides were sair:
Before they were well upon that border
They had mickle sorrow and care.
"O gin we were at the sweet Wellhaugh,
Under the merry leaves fair!"

Before they were well on the other side
  He set a sair cast them between—
"O gin we were by the Emmetburn
  Under the little leaves green,
Between the birks and the Emmet water,
  We had the better been."

When they came on that weary border,
  He sent an ill thing them amang;
"We winna ride ower to Hermitage,
  The wa's they are too strang;
But we will ride to the low castles,
  Though the ways be ill to gang."

Out then spak Burd Marjorie's lover,
  He was a fair man of his face;
"Gin I may be wroken of Lord Soulis
  I have sma' care of my place;

"Gin I may be wroken of Lord Soulis
  I have sma' care of ony thing;
Of the wine for shedding, the sheets for wedding,
  The kirk for christening.

"I have sma' care of my sad body
  Upon the ground to gang;
Gin I wist where I might be wroken of him
  I wad give it to him strang."

LORD SOULIS

Out then spak may Janet's brother,
He was a stout knight and a keen;
"He has sent his devils us amang
To work us trouble and teen.

"Gin I wist where I might be wroken of him,
Betwixen dark and day,
I wad give baith my soul and body
To hell to fetch away."

Out then spak Burd Annet's father,
He was a good man full of age;
"Ye'll speir at Estness, ye'll speir at Westness,
But no at Hermitage."

They turned their horse-heads round about,
Rode low down by the sand;
And a' the way they went upon,
The devil went at their hand.

The first castle they came to,
It stood upon a sea;
The least worth chamber in a' that castle,
It was a' whalestooth and sandal-tree.

"O whatten a may is yonder may,
Sae fair to see upon?"
"O yonder is my daughter Annet,
Out of my ha's was gone."

"Gin ye'll come hither to me, Annet,
  God's grace of me ye'se have."
"I wadna gang out, my auld fool father,
  Gin ye were graithed in your grave."

"Give me three kisses, my daughter Annet,
  Before my mouth is cold."
"I winna come forth for nae man's grey beard,
  Till my bairn be a sennight old."

He turned his face against the sea,
  His heart brak right atwain;
"The fire of hell for your body, Annet,
  Ere ye behold me again."

"Pull off the green, and the goodly green,
  Put on the black, the black,
For my father is ridden to Wearyland,
  I doubt he'll never win back."

They turned their horse-heads round about,
  Rode high upon a hill;
And a' the gate they gaed about,
  The devil them garred gang ill.

The neister castle they came to,
  It was hard upon the low champaign;
The least worth bower in a' that castle,
  It was a' white siller and green stane.

LORD SOULIS

"O whatten a may is yonder may
That is sae great of her body?"
"O yonder is my sister Janet,
Was stolen by night frae me.

"Gin ye'll come hither to me, Janet,
God's love of me ye'se hae."
"I wadna gang out for aye, brither,
Though ye were dead the day."

"O ye'll gang down to me, Janet,
For God's sweet mercy and mine;
For I have sought ye the lang lands ower,
These eight months wearing nine."

"I winna gang forth for nae brither,
Though his body should be lorn;
I winna gang forth for nae man's face,
Till Lord Soulis' bairn be born."

He turned his face against the brigg,
His heart brak right in three;
"The sorrow of hell for you, Janet,
And the warld's sorrow for me."

"Take down the red, and the bonny red,
Set up the black, the black:
For my brother is ridden to Wearieswood,
I wot he'll never win back."

They turned their horse-heads round about,
Rode back a day and twain:
And a' the rivers they rode upon
The devil rode at their rein.

The third castle they came to,
It was the castle of Hermitage;
There is nae man may break the sides of it,
Though the stanes therein are great of age.

"O whatten a may is yonder may,
That looks like ony flower?"
"O yon is my very love, Marjorie,
Was borne out of my bower."

The bower Lady Marjorie was in,
It had neither white cloths nor red,
There were nae rushes to the bower floors,
And nae pillows to the bed.

"O will ye come down but a very little,
For God's sake or for me?
Or will ye kiss me a very little,
But six poor kisses and three?"

She's leaned hersell to that window,
For sorrow she couldna stand;
She's bound her body by that window,
With iron at her hand.

LORD SOULIS

She's sworn by tree and by tree's leaf,
  By aits and rye and corn,
"Gin ye hadna come the night," she says,
  "I had been but dead the morn."

She's kissed him under the bower-bar
  Nine goodly times and ten;
And forth is come that keen wizard
  In the middest of his men.

And forth is come that foul wizard,
  God give him a curse and care!
Says "the life is one time sweet to have
  And the death is three times sair."

Forth is come that strong wizard,
  God give him a heavy day!
Says "ye shall have joy of your leman's body
  When April cometh after May."

Between the hill and the wan water
  In fields that were full sweet,
There was riding and running together,
  And many a man gat red-shod feet.

Between the wa's and the Hermitage water,
  In ways that were waxen red
There was cleaving of caps and shearing of jack,
  And many a good man was there dead.

They have taken that strong wizard
  To bind him by the hands:
The links of airn brast off his body
  Like splints of bursten birken wands.

And they have taken that keen wizard
  To bind him by the hause-bane;
The links of airn brast off his body
  As blossom that is burst wi' rain.

And they have taken that foul wizard
  To bind him by the feet:
The links of airn brast off his body
  As berries that are burst with heat.

They have putten fire upon his flesh,
  For nae fire wad it shrink:
They have casten his body in the wan well-head,
  For nae water wad it sink.

Up then gat the fiend Borolallie,
  Bade them "Give ower and let me:
Between warld's fire and warld's water
  He gat a gift of me;
Till fire come out of wan water,
  There's nane shall gar him dee."

"A rede, a rede, thou foul Borolallie,
  A good rede out of hand;
Shall we be wroken of Lord Soulis
  By water or by land?

Or shall we be wroken a great way off,
  Or even whereas we stand?"

And up it spak him, foul Borolallie,
  Between the tree and the leaf o' the tree;
"Ye maunna be wroken of Lord Soulis
  By land neither by sea;
Between red fire and wan water
  Weel wroken ye shall be."

And up it spak him, foul Borolallie,
  Between Lord Soulis and them a':
"Ye maunna be wroken of Lord Soulis
  Betwixen house and ha';
But ye maun take him to the Ninestane rigs
  And take his life awa'."

They have taken him to the Ninestane rigs
  His foul body to slay;
Between the whins and the whinstanes
  He had a weary way.

They have taken him to the Ninestane rigs
  His foul body to spill:
Between the green broom and the yellow
  He gat a bitter ill.

They had a sair cast with his foul body,
  There was nae man wist what to do;
"And O gin his body were weel sodden,
  Weel sodden and suppit in broo!"

And out it spak him, foul Borolallie,
  Says "whatten a coil's this coil?
Ye'll mak a fire on the Ninestane rigs,
  For a pot thereon to boil."

And out it spak him, foul Borolallie,
  Says "whatten a din's this din?
Ye'll boil his body within the brass,
  The brass to boil him in."

They boiled his body on the Ninestane rigs
  That wizard mickle of lear;
They have sodden the bones of his body,
  To be their better cheer.

They buried his bones on the Ninestane rigs
  But the flesh was a' clean gane;
There was great joy in a' that border
  That Lord Soulis was well slain.

LORD SCALES

LORD RANDAL lay in low prison,
He looked against the wa';
Gin the big wa' stanes were linen bands,
I'd win weel through them a'.

Lord Randal sat by a low lattice,
He looked against the sea;
Gin the foul bed straws were bonny ships,
I wot weel wad I be.

Lord Randal stood by a strang window
He looked against his hand;
Gin my twa wrist chains were hempen threads,
I'd win weel to the sand.

Ye'll take the rings frae my fingers,
The silk knot frae my hair:
Ye'll gie them to the bonny knight
That cries on me sae sair.

Ye'll take the gowd bands frae my back,
The covers frae my bed:
Ye'll gie them to the Lord Randal,
To put beneath his head.

Hae silk into your hands, Randal,
  And gowd twine to your feet:
And braw pillows about your head
  To keep your lang hair sweet.

For the rain rins through the rank bed straw,
  And the wet drips in the wa';
And the wee red worms in this prison
  Wad gar your gowd hair fa'.

I had liefer hae my ain twa hands,
  And keep my body cold;
I had liefer hae my own twa feet
  Than twa sic shoon of gold.

But I had liefer hae my lady's mouth
  Than the silk and the siller bands;
But I had liefer hae her sweet body
  Than a' the gowd in land.

I had liefer kiss my lady dead
  Than a live woman should kiss me:
I had liefer hae my lady dead
  Than a fair woman's live body.

O ye'se hae twine o' gowd for hemp,
  And twine o' silk for thread;
And ye shall hae her fair body,
  But no' her body dead.

LORD SCALES

She's loosed the knot upon his back,
  The knot upon his throat:
She's clad him with a suit of samite,
  And red silk to his coat.

She's washed him well wi' sweet waters,
  Put spice into his hair;
She's set his feet in a narrow side chamber,
  Upon a sideway stair.

He's ta'en him to her, Lady Helen,
  Where she sat by a bed,
The least cloth upon her body,
  It was of the noble red.

The insides of her bed curtains,
  The gold was gone them through;
The outsides of her bed curtains,
  They were full merry and blue.

The silk side of her bed pillows,
  It was of the summer green;
The gold was bound in her gold hair,
  That now should tell them twa between.

O came ye for my lord's land,
  O for my lord's fee;
Or came ye for my lord's hate,
  Or yet for the love of me?

O gin ye come like a land robber,
  Full soon shall ye hang;
But gin ye come like a woman's lover,
  Full sweetly ye shall gang.

O it was never for no hate,
  For lord's love nor for fee:
But a' the weird that is me on
  It was a' for your body.

Gin ye set nae scorn by me, Randal,
  To dree a weird and a pain,
It's no Lord Scales my auld husband
  That shall depart us twain.

Gin this be sooth of you, Randal,
  That ye have good will to play;
It's no Lord Scales my auld husband
  Shall be better of us twey.

For I hae reapers to the land,
  And sailors to the sea;
And I hae maidens to my bower
  That wait by three and three;
And it's no Lord Scales my auld husband
  Shall part my will and me.

The first draw rapes upon the ship
  Between the sea and the sea sand;
The neist they lie in the lang corn,
  Wi' the reaphooks to their hand;

And between the lang beds and the wa',
It's there the maidens stand.

She's had him to her bonnie bed,
She's laid it warm and wide;
He's clipped that lady by the middle waist,
And by the middle side.

There was neither light nor fire them by,
And they twain were set to sleep,
When she's turned her chin to the pillow side
Made her a space to weep.

He kissed her on her fair twa breasts,
And hard upon her chin;
He's kissed her by her white halse-bane
The little salt tears fell in.

The small tears fell about her face
Between her lips and his;
From side to side of her gold hair
Her face was full sad to kiss.

Lie down, lie down now, Lady Helen,
Lie still into my hand;
I wadna gie ane o' the pillow-beres
For ten measures of land.

Lie still into mine arms, Helen,
Betwixen sheet and sheet:
I wadna gie ane o' the cods of silk
For ten measures of wheat.

Lie still into mine arms, Helen,
The gold side of the bed;
I wadna gie ane o' thy kaims o' lammer
For the gold on the queen's head.

It's I lie saft the night, Randal,
With my head against your face;
But gin ye had slept in my stables,
It had been the sweeter place.

It's I lie saft the night, Randal,
But ye'll lie hard the morn;
For I hear a mouse rin by the straw,
And a bird rin by the corn.

O whatten a bird is that, Helen,
I wad fain ken what it ails?
It's an auld bird and an ill, Randal,
Gin it be no Lord Scales.

Then in and came her auld husband,
I wot a fu' lean bird was he;
It's wake ye or sleep ye now, madame,
Ye'se gar mak room for me.

O are ye sick the night, Lord Scales,
In the head or else the side?
Or are ye fain to sleep, Lord Scales,
For the fear ye have to ride?

LORD SCALES

Randal's taen out her girdle knife,
  He's stricken him amang his een;
It was mair for the lady's love
  Than it was for his proper teen.

Out came a' her bower maidens,
  In their night smocks and night rails;
It was a' for sorrow of their lady,
  It was naething for Lord Scales.

Out came a' her bower maidens,
  In their sma' coats green and white;
With a red rose wrought for the left breast,
  And a rose wrought for the right.

Lord Scales had on a goodly coat,
  It was a' bound wi' steel thickly;
Lord Randal had but a little shirt
  Between the wind and his body.

The first good straik Lord Randal strak,
  The red blood sprang upon his face;
It was mair for his lady's love
  Than it was for her lord's grace.

The neist good straik Lord Randal strak,
  The bright blood sprang upon his nails;
It was mair for love of Lady Helen
  Than pity of Lord Scales.

Lord Scales he strak a fu' straight straik,
  But Randal strak a sair;
Lord Scales had a little joy of it,
  But Lady Helen had mair.

Gar set my ships into the sea
  And my hooks into the corn;
For gin I have lost a man the night,
  I'll get a man the morn.

BURD MARGARET

"O WHA will get me wheaten bread
And wha will get me wine?
And wha will build me a gold cradle
To rock this child of mine?

"There's nane will drink of bitter wine,
Nor eat of bitter bread;
There's nane will ca' me a clean maiden
When my body is dead.

"Nae silk maun come upon my feet,
Nae gowd into my hair;
My brothers smite me on the mouth,
Where nae man shall kiss mair."

She held her hands in the wan water
Till the fingers were a' red;
Her face was like nae fair burd's face
That has her maidenhead.

She's streekit the water on her hair,
She's signed it owre her chin,
She's streekit the water on her lips
To let the draps gang in.

The tears ran through her fair sma' mouth;
  The white bones small and thin
Were waxen sharper in her lang throat,
  And in her wrist and chin.

"Gin my mither had wist o' this
  When she was left wi' me,
I wot these arms that are waxen lean
  Had ne'er gaun round a man's body.

"Gin my mither had dreamed a dream
  That sic a kail should fall on me,
She had bound me between her smock and her kirtle
  And cast me ower the sea.

"She had row'd me between her smock and her kirtle,
  Let me to swim or sink;
And I had drunken o' the saut water
  Instead of tears to drink.

"The bairn that is waxen me within,
  It is waxen a pain to me;
But weel lie he and ever weel
  That made my bairn's body.

"The white that was in my twa brows,
  I wot it is waxen red;
But weel lie he and ever weel
  That had my maidenhead.

BURD MARGARET

"O weel be to the fair red roses
  Stood high against my chin;
But ill be to the good green leaves,
  For they were half the sin.

"O weel be to the little bird
  Sang low against my knee;
But ill be to my fause nourice,
  She had sma' reck of me.

"O weel be to the fair red roses
  Stood high against my face;
But ill be to the bonny rowan,
  I wish it never grace."

Burd Margaret lay in the rank water-grass
  By the fairest ford in Tyne;
And between the grass and the aspen leaf,
  She saw their armour shine.

The first of them had fair Milan coats,
  The second had but pikes and jacks;
The third had coats of fair scarlet,
  And gold across their caps.

There were three and three wi' bits of steel,
  And three and three wi' siller fine,
And three and three wi' bits of gold,
  Was red as fair new wine.

"Whatten men be these that rin," she said,
  "Or whatten men be these that ride?
Either ye be thieves frae the north border,
  Or men that look a bride."

"Gin I be rid frae the north border
  And my braw bride won south,
I'll gar her clip me round the body
  And kiss me on the mouth."

"I think ye be nae knight," she said,
  "Nae knight that wons about;
There was never man but a devil
  That had sae lang a snout.

"Gin I should kiss your mouth," she said.
  "I wis I had kissed a loon;
I think ye be some clouted carter,
  Albeit ye wear steel shoon."

"I am Lord Hugh of Burnieshaw,
  Ye may weel ken the face o' me;
And I wad hae back the bonnie lad bairn
  That I left here wi' thee."

"Gin ye be Hughie of Burnieshaw,
  As I trow a better may have been,
Tell me what words I said to you,
  When the rowans were green."

BURD MARGARET

"O first ye pu'd the green berry,
And syne ye pu'd the red;
And the first word that ever ye spak
Was to complain your maidenhead.

"O first ye pu'd the red hollin,
And syne ye pu'd the green:
And the first word ye spak to me
Ye grat fu' sair between."

"Gin ye be Hughie of Burnieshaw,
As I think weel ye'll never be,
Here have ye back your bonny lad bairn,
That sair has troubled me."

She's caught her hand to his bridle-rein,
Held up her mouth to touch his chin;
"Ye garred me pu' the girdle straight
That the fair knave bairn was in."

"What needs ye flur and mock, Margaret?
What needs ye scorn at me?
Ye never gat harm of your fause brothers,
But ye gat aye the mair gude o' me."

He's put his hands to her body,
He's laid her thwart his selle;
And ye that hae gotten a bonny sitter
Gar keep the neist yoursell.

Aye they rode weel, and aye better,
  Until the moon was nigh to sheen;
And aye the tears ran in her breast,
  And aye in the gold between.

"O whether is yon a cry of carlies,
  Or men that cry on me?"
"Bide still, bide still now, Burd Margaret,
  For ye hear naething but the sea."

"O whatten is yonder noise," she said,
  "That I hear cry on us behind?"
"Haud ye by my sleeve now, Burd Margaret,
  For ye hear naething but the wind."

Aye they rode weel, and aye better,
  Until the moon was waxen weak;
And aye she laid her face to his,
  And her tears ran by his cheek.

Aye when he kissed her bonny een,
  I wot they grat fu' sair;
Aye when she laid her head to his,
  I wot the tears ran through his hair.

Aye they rode slow, and aye slower,
  Till the moon's time was a' done;
Between the road and the saddle
  She thought to bear a son.

BURD MARGARET

There she saw her first brother,
  Stood back to a fair tree;
Said "Grace go with our bonny sister
  To ride in sic a companie."

Said "Grace go with our bonnie sister,
  To wear her gown aside;
It is not meet for a good woman
  To set her girdle wide."

He's stricken the first across the neck,
  Shorn clean his beard and hair;
"How haud ye weel, my fair brother,
  Ye'se get of me nae mair."

He's cloven the second through the chin,
  The third upon the knee;
"Now haud ye weel, my three brothers,
  Ye'se get nae mair of me."

They set her in a fair bride-bed,
  Full glad she was the morn;
And between the silk and the braw geld claith,
  The fair knave bairn was born.

THE WORM OF SPINDLESTONHEUGH

LADY HELEN sat in Spindlestonheugh
With gold across her hair;
For every plait was on her head,
I wot a gold piece was there.

Lady Helen sat in Spindlestonheugh
With gold across her head;
The green gown on her fair body
Was woven with gold thread.

Lady Helen sat in Spindlestonheugh
Wi' silk below her breast;
The best pearl in the queen's girdle
Was lesser than her least.

Lady Helen sat in Spindlestonheugh
With silk upon her feet;
The seams were sewn wi' cloth of scarlet
To keep them frae the weet.

"O wha will keep the keys for me
Until the lord be hame?
Or wha will ca' his kye for me,
To see gin ony be lame?"

THE WORM OF SPINDLESTONHEUGH

She hadna bided a month but three
  With silk bands to her side,
When word is come to Lady Helen
  To meet her father's ae new bride.

"Ye'll bring the owsen and the sheep to stall,
  Ye'll bring the kye to stand;
Ye'll set the first key in my girdle,
  The neist key at my hand."

"But gin he has wedded a witch woman
  To work sic teen on me,
I'll come nae mair to Spindlestonheugh
  Till green grow in a dry tree."

And she's done on her braw girdle,
  Between the sun and moon;
And she's done on her kaims of gold,
  Her gold gown and her shoon.

She's tied her hair in three witch knots,
  I wot, abune her bonny een;
And for her hair and her body,
  I wot she might have been a queen.

"I wish the sickle was in the rye,
  And the rye was ower my head;
And aye the next rose I shall gather,
  I wish the white may be the red."

She's tane the keys intil her hands
  Between the red sun and the moon;
The rain ran down upon the grass,
  And stained in her silk shoon.

She's tane the keys to her girdle-tie
  Between the warm sun and the weet;
The rain that was between the grass and rye,
  Ran down upon her feet.

"O whatten a burd is yonder burd
  That shines about her head?"
"It is but Helen my ae daughter
  Has clad hersell wi' red."

"O where gat she thae stones of price,
  The warst might serve a queen?"
"It is but for the summer season
  She's clad hersell wi' green."

Lady Helen knelt upon her knees,
  She knelt upon her yellow hair;
"Hae back your keys, my dear father,
  God give you weel to fare."

Lady Helen knelt into the dust,
  She knelt upon the roadway stane;
"And God you keep, madame, my mither,
  As I shall be your ain."

THE WORM OF SPINDLESTONHEUGH

Out then spak the new-come bride,
I wot she spak wi' pain and care;
"O some hae gold to weave, Helen,
And some hae gold to wear."

Out then spak the witch-mother,
I wot she spak fu' little worth;
"Look where my saddle sits, Helen,
Ye'll stand against the saddle-girth."

She's tane the red kaims frae her hair,
The red shoon frae her feet;
She's set her face to the saddle-stirrup,
That nane should hear her greet.

And aye she ran, and weel she ran
Till her sides were waxen sair;
And the sun that was upon the ways
Had burnt her through her hair.

They hadna ridden a mile but three
When she was fain to bide;
For the blood was come upon her feet
And the pain upon her side.

And whiles she ran, and whiles she grat,
In the warm sun and the cold,
Till they came to the bonny castle
Was bigged upon with gold.

"O see ye not thae towers, Helen,
Where ye gat meat and wine?
It's I maun ligg in the braw bride-chamber,
And ye maun ligg wi' swine.

"O see ye not thae halls, Helen,
Where ye gat silk to wear?
It's I shall hae the gold gowns on,
When your body is bare."

"O ye'll sit in the braw guest-chamber,
And ye'll drink white and red;
But ye'll gar them gie me the washing water,
The meats and the broken bread?"

"Ye'll get nae chine o' the broken loaves,
The white bread wi' the brown;
Ye'll drink of the rain and the puddle water
My maids shall cast ye down."

"O ye'll sit in the braw guest-chamber
Wi' the gowd braids on your hair;
But ye'll gie me a poor coat and a smock
For my body to wear?

"O I shall ligg i' the trodden straw,
And ye in a gold bride-bed;
But ye'll gie me a claith to hap my feet,
And a claith to hap my head?"

THE WORM OF SPINDLESTONHEUGH

"Ye'll get no claith to hap you in,
  Ye'll get no coats of me;
Ye'll get nae mair but a riven smock
  To wear on your body."

And she's ate of the foul swine's meat
  With her saft lips and fine;
She's put her mouth to the rank water,
  Was poured amang the swine.

Never ae word spak Lady Helen,
  Never ae word but twa;
"O gin my mither had hands to help,
  I wad be weel holpen awa'."

Never ae word spak Lady Helen,
  Never ae word but three;
"O gin my mither had lips to kiss,
  Sae weel she wad kiss me!

"She wad kiss me on my ravelled hair,
  The foul cheek and the chin;
She wad kiss me on the weary mouth,
  Where the rank water gaed in."

Out then came the witch mother:
  "What ails ye now to greet?
Here's grass to hap ye dry, Helen,
  And straw to hap ye sweet."

The rain fell frae her feet and hands,
  Frae her lang hair and fine:
"What ails ye at the baked meats, Helen,
  The brown wheat bread and the wine?"

She's turned her by the waist about,
  She's turned her by the knee;
She's witched her body to a laidley worm,
  A laidley worm to be.

"The red fruit shall grow in green river water,
  And green grass in the wet sea,
Ere ye shall come to a fair woman,
  A fair woman to be."

And she's garr'd bigg her seven swine-brows,
  She's made them wide and lang;
She's tane the kail and the meal pocks
  That the foul worm might feed amang.

Aye she roupit and aye she croupit
  And aye she soupit the mair;
And for the breath of her laidley mouth
  The sweet land stank fu' sair.

Word is come to Lady Helen's brother,
  In God's town where he lay,
His father had gatten a braw new bride
  And his sister was stown away.

THE WORM OF SPINDLESTONHEUGH

Word is come to Lord Richard,
  Where he was in God's land,
There were nine men out of the north
  Would fain be to his hand.

"Whatten word is this, ye good sailors,
  This word ye hae to me?
Gin it be a word of the good land,
  A dear word it maun be."

"For nine mile out of Spindlestonheugh
  A laidley worm to see;
It has the tongue of a maid-woman,
  And a worm's foul body.

"For nine mile out of Spindlestonheugh
  Of grass and rye there is nae routh;
There is sma' routh of the good red corn,
  For the breath of her rank mouth."

"Whatten word is this, ye carlish caitives?
  For this word ye hae to me,
There shall never meat come in my mouth
  Till I be put to sea."

And he's garr'd bigg him a fu' fair ship,
  He's biggit it a' of the rowan tree;
It was neither hasped wi' gowd nor airn,
  To haud it frae the sea.

It was neither hasped wi' gowd nor airn,
  Nor yet wi' siller wan;
But a' the wood it was biggit wi'
  Was of the white rowan.

And they sailed lang, and they sailed sair,
  And they drave ower to south;
And a wind was in the ship's side,
  And a wind in the ship's mouth.

And when he came by Spindlestonheugh
  He's tane the vervein in his hand;
"Now God have heed of the fair ship,
  For we must row to land."

"Have pity of us, O Lord Richard,
  For we dare no further gang."
"Gin I may come by a goodly gallows,
  The best of ye a' shall hang."

But when he saw the seven swine-trows,
  He weened a sair thing to have seen;
And when he saw the laidley worm,
  The tears brast ower in his een.

"O gin ye'll kiss my laidley mouth
  For the love of God's body,
I winna do ye scaith, brother,
  Though I be a foul thing to see."

THE WORM OF SPINDLESTONHEUGH

He's put his mouth to her laidley mouth,
  He's kissed her once and twice;
"I had liever lose God's dear body
  Than kiss this foul worm thrice."

He's put his mouth to her laidley mouth,
  He's kissed her kisses three;
The flesh fell frae her laidley mouth
  And frae her rank body;
And it was but his sister Helen
  Stood at Lord Richard's knee.

She was clad all in the fair red samite,
  Her mouth was red and fair;
There was nae burd in the good land
  That had such yellow hair.

He's tane him to the witch mother
  That sat by her bairn's bed;
The gold was gone in her grey hair,
  Her face was heavy and red.

"O wae be wi' you, ye ill woman,
  And the young bairn at your knee;
There's never a bairn shall die abed
  That comes of your body."

"Now God you save, my fair brother,
  For his dear body that was dead;
Now God you save and maiden Mary,
  That kept me of her maidenhead."

DURIESDYKE

THE rain rains sair on Duriesdyke,
Both the winter through and the spring;
And she that will gang to get broom thereby
She shall get an ill thing.

The rain rains sair on Duriesdyke,
Both the winter and the summer day;
And he that will steek his sheep thereby
He shall go sadly away.

"Between Crossmuir and Duriesdyke
The fieldhead is full green;
The shaws are thick in the fair summer,
And three well-heads between.

"Flower of broom is a fair flower,
And heather is good to play."
O she went merry to Duriesdyke,
But she came heavy away.

"It's I have served you, Burd Maisry,
These three months through and mair;
And the little ae kiss I gat of you,
It pains me aye and sair.

DURIESDYKE

"This is the time of heather-blowing,
And that was syne in the spring;
And the little ae leaf comes aye to red,
And the corn to harvesting."

The first kiss there twa mouths had,
Sae fain she was to greet;
The neist kiss their twa mouths had,
I wot she laughed fu' sweet.

"Cover my head with a silken hood,
My feet with a yellow claith;
For to stain my body wi' the dyke-water,
God wot I were fu' laith."

He's happit her head about wi' silk,
Her feet with a gowden claith;
The red sendal that was of price,
He's laid between them baith.

The grass was low by Duriesdyke,
The high heather was red;
And between the grass and the high heather,
He's tane her maidenhead.

They did not kiss in a noble house,
Nor yet in a lordly bed;
But their mouths kissed in the high heather,
Between the green side and the red.

"I have three sailing ships, Maisry,
For red wheat and for wine;
The maintopmast is a bonny mast,
Three furlongs off to shine.

"The foremast shines like new lammer,
The mizzenmast like steel:
Gin ye wad sail wi' me, Maisry,
The warst should carry ye weel."

"Gin I should sail wi' you, Lord John,
Out under the rocks red,
It's wha wad be my mither's bower-maiden
To hap saft her feet in bed?

"Gin I should sail wi' you, Lord John,
Out under the rocks white,
There's nane wad do her a very little ease
To hap her left and right."

It fell upon the midwinter,
She gat mickle scaith and blame;
She's bowed hersell by the white water
To see his ships come hame.

She's leaned hersell against the wind,
To see upon the middle tide;
The faem was fallen in the running wind,
The wind was fallen in the waves wide.

DURIESDYKE

"There's nae moon by the white water
To do me ony good the day;
And but this wind a little slacken,
They shall have a sair seaway.

"O stir not for this nied, baby,
O stir not at my side;
Ye'll have the better birth, baby,
Gin ye wad but a little abide."

WESTLAND WELL

YE maun mak' me a scarlet gown, Lord John,
A scarlet gown to the knee;
It maun be sewn wi' a gowd needle,
To mak' fit wear to me.

It maun be sewn wi' a gowd needle,
And spun o' silk for thread;
And ye maun gie me a band of silk,
To tie upon my head.
And ye maun gie me a sheet of silk
To put into my bed.

O wha was't made ye proud, Janet,
Or ever ye were born?
There's nae gowd in the land, Janet,
Is redder than the corn.

O wha was't taught you words, Janet,
Or wha was't learned you pride?
There's mony a better face than yours
Would fain lie neist my side.

WESTLAND WELL

O haud your tongue, Lord John o' the Mains,
  I doubt ye hae drunken wine;
There is not a maid that wons in heaven
  Wi' sic a face as mine.

Gin I were set in the high heaven,
  And God's mother were set below,
I wad be queen of the high heaven,
  And she wad be let go.

When she cam in Lord John's bower,
  She never had kissed man:
When she cam frae Lord John's bower
  She was but his leman.

O ye'll gar make me a bonny bed,
  Ye'll make it warm and sweet,
Ye'll set a pillow to my head, mither,
  And a pillow to my feet.

It fell about the middle May time
  When the apple flowers wax red,
Her mither began to chide with her
  She kept sae lang abed.

I canna stand to walk, mither,
  But I'm just like to die,
And wae be to your bonny bloodhound
  That bit me by the knee.

Yestreen my maids took off the sheet
  To wash i' the Westland Well,
And lest the bonny web suld ravel,
  I set a hand mysel.

We washed the blue thread and the brown,
  The white thread and the black;
And sae cam ben your fause bloodhound,
  And bit me in the back.

Sae sair it rent and bit, mither,
  Sae sair it bit and clang,
And ever I hope in God, mither,
  Ye'll gar that bloodhound hang.

What's this o't now, maiden Janet?
  What's this o't now? quo' she;
There's nae such hound that bites women,
  There's nae such langs to me.

Tell me now, Janet, she says,
  And I winna gar ye lee,
Is this a hound's tooth or a child's shaping
  That mars your straight body?

O where your cheek was red, Janet,
  Your cheek is sick and wan;
And where your back was right and flat,
  It bows like a loaden man.

WESTLAND WELL

O where your throat was round, Janet,
It's lean and loose by this;
And where your lip was sweet, Janet,
It's grown too thin to kiss.

The blood sprang in her cheek, fair Janet,
The blood sprang in her chin;
I doubt there's ane wad kiss me, mither,
Though I be sick and thin.

About the time of moon-rising
They set her saft in bed,
About the time of star-setting
They streekit her for dead.

O ill be in your meat, Lord John,
And ill be in your wine;
Gin the bairn be none of your getting,
I'm sure it's none of mine.

Ill be in your bed, Lord John,
And ill be in your way,
Gin ye had been hangit a year agone,
I had been the merrier May.

EARL ROBERT

O SOME ride east and some ride north,
And some ride west and south;
But the ae best gate that ever I rade
Was a' for her red mouth.

O some wear blue and bonny scarlet,
And some wear green and red;
And it's a' for love of her yellow hair
I'll wear but golden thread.

Gin this be Annie of Waterswa'
That gars ye speak sae hie,
There's nae man of your name, Earl Robert,
Shall get her fair body.

O then he came by Waterswa',
The rain was sair and strang;
Fair Annie sat in a bower-window,
And her gold hair was grown lang.

Gin I might swim to ye, Robert,
I wad never spare for gloves or gown;
I wad never spare for the cold water,
But I have sore fear to drown.

EARL ROBERT

Now God thee hold, thou fair Annie,
  The wa's are hard to leap;
The water is ill to swim, Annie,
  And the brigg is ill to keep.

Gin I should open to ye, Robert,
  I wis it were open shame:
It were great pity of me, Robert,
  For I gang but sick and lame.

O twice I cuttit the silk string through
  That was upon my back;
And twice I cuttit the gown away
  That wadn'a haud me slack.

It's ill wi' me the night, Robert,
  It's weel wi' my leman;
For the wine that comes in my fingers,
  I spill it on my han';
And the meat that's in my very mouth,
  I wot it feeds a man.

Gin I may win to ye, Annie,
  I think ye'll keep me weel.
I were the liefer of you, Robert,
  But for the doors of shut steel.[1]

[1] In the Manuscript this stanza has been lightly struck through with a pen. Probably the author intended to delete it.—[Eds.]

Gin I may win to ye, Annie,
  The tane o' us should weel fare.
There's three men keep the ways, Robert,
  Between the gate and the water-stair.

I wot the night there's deep water,
  Runs red upon the brim:
It's full between the wa's, Annie,
  This were but ill to swim.

There's rain the night in Carrilees,
  I wot the rain is rank;
There be twa fathoms of strang water
  Between it bank and bank.

But he's rid out through Carrilees' brow,
  I wot, baith wet and wan;
Annie lay in her chamber-window,
  She was a glad woman.

Between the gate and the water-stair
  He made him room to stand;
The wet ran frae his knees and feet,
  It ran upon his hand.

And he's won through to her chamber,
  He's kissed her neist the chin:
"O gin ye'll keep me out, Annie,
  Is there ony will take me in?"

EARL ROBERT

Up then gat her auld father,
  Between the wall and her bed feet;
"Is there ony breath in your lips, Earl Robert,
  To gar a dead mouth smell sweet?"

He's tane her by the gold girdle,
  He's garr'd it break atwain;
There's nae room here for Earl Robert,
  The ways are sae fou' o' rain.

He's tane a keen sword in his hand,
  He's set him to the wa';
And the very heart's blood of Earl Robert,
  I wot he's garr'd it fa'.

Out then spak she, fair Annie,
  At the bed's foot where she lay;
"There's a time for you the night, father,
  And a time for us the day.

"O gin ye dig na deep, father,
  I wot ye maun dig wide;
And set my lord to the nether hand,
  And my bairn to the green side.

"Ye'll set my head to his foot, father,
  That he be neist the sun;
For a' that was between us twa,
  I think it's a' weel done."

THE KING'S AE SON

QUO' the bracken-bush to the wan well-head,
"O whatten a man is this man dead?"

"O this is the King's ae son," quo' she,
"That lies here dead upon my knee."

"What will ye do wi' the King's ae son?"
"The little fishes shall feed him on."

"What will ye strew for his body's bed?"
"Green stanes aneath his head."

"What will ye gie for his body's grace?"
"Green leaves abune his face."

"What will ye do wi' the rings on his hand?"
"Hide them ower wi' stane and sand."

"What will ye do wi' the gowd in his hair?"
"Hide it ower wi' rushes fair."

"What shall he have when the hill-winds blow?"
"Cauld rain and routh of snow."

"What shall he get when the birds fly in?"
"Death for sorrow, and sorrow for sin."

THE KING'S AE SON

"What shall come to his father, the King?"
"Long life and a heavy thing."

"What shall come to his mother, the Queen?"
"Grey hairs and a bitter teen."

"What to his leman, that garr'd him be slain?"
"Hell's pit and hell's pain."

LADY MAISIE'S BAIRN

"GIN ye winna cease for the pity of him,
O cease for the pity of me;
There was never bairn born of a woman
Between the sea-wind and the sea,
There was never bairn born of a woman
That was born so bitterly."

The ship drove hard upon the wind,
I wot it drove full mightily;
But the fair gold sides upon the ship
They were bursten with the sea.

"O I am sae fain for you, Lord John,
Gin ye be no sae fain;
How shall I bear wi' my body,
It is sae full of pain?

"O I am sae fain of your body,
Ye are no sae fain of me;"
But the sails are riven wi' the wind
And the sides are full of sea.

O when she saw the sails riven,
The sair pain bowed her back;
But when she saw the sides bursten,
I wot her very heart brak.

LADY MAISIE'S BAIRN

The wind waxed in the sea between,
  The rain waxed in the land;
Lord John was happéd wi' saut sea-faem,
  Lady Maisie wi' sea-sand;
And the little bairn between them twa
  That was to her right hand.

The rain rains sair on Duriesdyke
  To the land side and the sea;
There was never bairn born of a woman
  That was born mair bitterly.

WEARIESWA'

THE wind wears ower the Wearieswa'
To the right and the left hand;
The wind wears ower by the Wearieswa'
And under by the sea-sand.

Every bolt in Wearieswa'
Wi' siller was it sparred;
Every gate in Wearieswa'
Wi' red gold was it barred.

Every window in Wearieswa'
It was hasped in nickal keen;
Every bower in Wearieswa'
It was set wi' rushes clean.

There wonneth a woman in the Wearieswa',
A strong spell is her upon;
He that shall kiss her mouth for love
Of his life he is fordone.

There is nae man made of a woman
As the grass grows and the corn,
But gin he have kissed that lady's mouth
Of his lips he is forlorn.

WEARIESWA'

Lord Robert is ridden to the Wearieswa'
  Between the low ling and the heather hie;
A wind was comen out of Wearieswa'
  Between the hielands and the sea.

O whatten a wind is this weary wind
  A weary wind to me?
It's neither a scart o' the mill-water,
  Nor yet a wind o' the sea.

Lady Janet looked ower by a little window,
  She was fain of any man;
For the lack of love that was her in
  All her body was wan.

She's laid her chin out ower the wa' stanes,
  All her body was weak;
The tears fell over in her face wan,
  Betwixen mouth and cheek.

Gin I kissed that lady on her lips
  The better man would I be;
Gin I kissed that lady on her hands twain
  'Twere pain of my body.

O gin ye should kiss my weary hands
  Your teen would be fu' sair;
And gin ye should kiss my heavy mouth
  Your teen wad be mickle mair.

But ye'll gae down to yon wan water-side,
  Gar make a ship of ashen tree;
And ye maun sail by seven ways
  Between the faem and the green sea.

The first water ye'll sail upon
  Men call it Wearieswyte;
Whoso cometh to that water
  He shall have little delight.

The neist water ye'll sail upon
  Men call it Wearieswan;
Whoso cometh to that water
  He is nae sicker man.

The neist water ye'll sail upon
  Men call it Wearies way;
Whoso cometh to that water
  He wins the better away.

The neist water ye'll sail upon
  Men call it Wearieswoe;
Whoso cometh to that water
  He shall neither stand nor go.

The neist water ye'll sail upon
  Men call it Wearies ween;
Whoso cometh to that water
  Of his body he shall have teen.

WEARIESWA'

The neist water ye'll sail upon
  Men call it Weariesyett;
Whoso cometh to that water
  An ill wonning he shall get.

The last water ye'll sail upon
  Men call it Wearieshead;
Whoso cometh to that water
  It were better for him to be dead.

And gin the sair sea scathe you not
  Nor the sea-worms in the sea,
This weary weird that is me upon
  Ye shall take off from me.

And gin the water win you not upon
  Ye shall have good harbouring,
When ye come back to Wearieswa',
  About the fair birk flowering.

And ye maun be yoursell alane
  And I with a' my men,
And ye maun stand low down them amang
  To see if I shall you ken.

Gin the wan water win me not upon
  Between the sea-banks and the sea,
Then I'll come back for your sake, Janet,—
  A token I'll hae wi' me.

But how shall ye be seen, Hynd Robert,
  O how shall ye be known,
Amang so mony gentlemen
  That wear the gold alone?

O where they wear the goodly bright gold
  I shall wear yellow and black;
And a little green hood behind my hair
  To hang down at my back.

But how shall ye be kent, Janet,
  Or how shall ye be seen,
Amang so many goodly ladies
  That ye maun gang between?

O where they wear a ring, Robert,
  I shall wear two and three,
And a girdle with a fair white stane,
  And by that ye shall ken me.

And where they wear but yellow lammer,
  I shall wear siller sheen;
And where they gang like a queen's handmaids,
  I shall gang like a queen.

A kell o' gowd abune my head
  And a band abune my eebree,
And in every o' them a jewel stone
  My witness for to be;

And half my kirtle of red sendal
To hang down at my knee;
And half my kirtle of brown sendal
That shall be wrought to me.
And the shoon on my feet of yellow samite
And by that ye shall me see.

He's made him a ship o' the goodly ash
The sides thereof were wan;
The first water he sailed upon
He was the heavier man.

A' the oars were wrought of gold
And a' the sails of red;
The last water he sailed upon
He seemed he was but dead.

But he's won back to Wearieswa'
That was hard on a great sea;
His hair was fu' of the wan sea-water
And he halted of his knee.

Between the sea and the sea-banks
He's let his bonny ship stand;
His clothes were fu' of the wan rain-water
And he halted of his hand.

O I will draw to me a weed,
A weed baith poor and low,
And I will gang before my lady's face,
To see if she will me know.

And he has drawn to him a weed
  A weed of yellow and black;
But there was nae hood behind his hair
  To hang down at his back.

The first gate that he came to
  It was little for his delight;
The knappies that were that gate upon
  They were hewn of siller white.

The last gate that he came by
  It was little for his ease;
Before he had well won ower it,
  The blood ran frae his knees.

The neist gate that he came by
  His comfort was waxen cold;
Every bolt that gate within
  It was carven of red gold.

And he's gane up to the high chamber,
  He's found that lady there,
The red sendal on her body,
  And the red gold in her hair.

And as he stood low and very low
  Amang thae goodly men;
He stood amang them hoodless,
  There was nae man did him ken.

And she spied him weel and very weel
  Gin she might his body see;
O wha is yon gangs hoodless,
  For my love it mauna be.

And she sought weel and very weel
  Gin she might him behold;
She was mair fair of his fair body
  Than the rain is of the mould.

And a' the men that were her before
  They were red and nothing wan;
And when she saw his goodly face,
  She weened it was another man.

And when she looked his face upon,
  It was wan and nothing red,
And a' his hair was riven wi' rain
  That rained upon his head.

O ye'll take out yon hoodless man,
  That hirples on the marl;
I thought it were my love, Hynd Robert,
  It is but a hireman carl.

And ye'll take out yon gangrel fellow
  That hirples on the clay;
I thought it were my love, Hynd Robert,
  That hae been lang away.

He's taen him down to yon wan water-stand,
  The tears fell ower his een;
Before he was weel in his goodly ship
  The wind began to ween.

He's turned his face to the fair leeland,
  He was right fu' o' care;
Before he was weel upon the sea,
  The water was waxen sair.

Ye'll cast me in the heavy water
  That is both green and black,
And ye'll bind my feet with a twine of silk;
  Pray for the storms to slack.

Ye'll cast me in the weary water
  That is both green and grey,
And ye'll bind my arms upon my back;
  Pray for the rains to stay.

And they've cast over his fair body
  In the water that was sae white;
And they drove over before the wind
  A day's space and a night.

The first wave that cam nigh the ship
  It smote her in the side;
And ever alas! quo' the ae first man,
  "This water is ill to bide!"

WEARIESWA'

The neist wave that cam nigh the ship,
  It smote her in the head;
"Haul round, haul round," quo' the eldest man,
  "This water maun be our deid!"

And they spied ower the wan sea wide
  To see gin ony help might be;
And there they saw him, Hynd Robert,
  That fleeted upright in the sea.

And they spied out upon the sea,
  It was a weary water and wan;
And there they saw him, Hynd Robert
  That fleeted as a living man.

"O whatten a weird is this, Hynd Robert,
  That is of your body,
To fleet out ower in the easterin' wind
  That thraws upon the sea?"

The wind shall blaw in the wan water,
  It shall never slack for me,
Till ye bring my lady to yon sea-sand,
  Cast her body in the sea.

The wind shall thraw in the wild water;
  I wot it shall never bide,
Till ye bring that lady to your sea-banks,
  Cast her body ower the ship's side.

They've had that lady to yon sea-banks
  And ower by yon heather hie;
They bound her hands before her face,
  Cast her body in the sea.

THE EARL OF MAR'S DAUGHTER

[It is doubtful whether this ballad has any right to be included among the original works of Swinburne, but it gives interesting evidence of the activity of his mind and of his attitude to the old poetry of the Border. The MS. was found with those of several other ballads, most of them published in the Third Series of *Poems and Ballads* (1889), and was probably written in 1862 or 1863. At first sight it seems like an attempt to re-compose from memory the well-known ballad of "Earl Mar's Daughter," which was originally published in 1828 by Peter Buchan in his *Ancient Ballads and Songs of the North of Scotland.* The story is exactly identical, and the diction sometimes very close; for instance, the Allingham-Buchan version begins:—

"It was intill a pleasant time,
Upon a simmer's day,
The noble Earl Mar's daughter
Went forth to sport and play.

And as she play'd and sported
Below a green aik tree,
There she saw a sprightly doo
Set on a branch sae hie,"

and so forth. But what a closer study of the MS. shows is that Swinburne, conscious of much that is vulgar and modern in Buchan's version, was setting himself the task of recomposing the ballad in language more severely archaic. This was actually done, to some extent, by William Allingham in the *Ballad Book* of 1864, and it is possible that Allingham's partial success induced Swinburne to lay aside his project. He was, however, far ahead of his time in perceiving that a loose roughness of texture was essential to the

original form of every genuine Border ballad, and an examination of the MS. of the "Earl of Mar's Daughter" shows, by its innumerable alterations and reconsiderations of the text, that Swinburne laboured with the utmost courage and assiduity to recover the primitive diction and to remove what some one has called "the plague of marketable neatness" which disfigures the usual recast of a romantic ballad. Unfortunately, he did not in this case pursue his task to its conclusion.—E. G.]

It was intill a goodly time,
The first morning in May,
The bonny Earl of Mar's daughter
Went forth hersell to play.

She's tane her to the bonny birkenshaw
Amang the fair green leaves;
There she saw a bonny doo
Sat on the leaf o' the tree.

"O Coo-me-doo, my love sae true,
Gin ye'll come down to me,
I'll gie ye a cage of good red gowd
For a cage of greenshaw tree.

"Gowden hingers roun' your cage,
And siller roun' your wa',
I'll gar ye shine as bonny a bird
As the bonniest ower them a'."

She hadna weel these words spoken,
Nor yet she hadna said,
Till Coo-me-doo flew frae the leaves
And lighted on her head.

And she's tane hame this bonny bird,
  Brought him to bower and ha';
She's garred him shine the bonniest bird
  That was out ower them a'.

When day was gane and night was come
  In ae chamber they were that tide;
And there she saw a goodly young man
  Stood straight up at her side.

"How cam ye in my bower-chamber,
  For sair it marvels me,
For the bolts are made o' the good red gowd
  And the door-shafts of a good tree."

"O haud your tongue now, May Janet,
  And of your talking let me be;
Mind ye not on your turtle-doo
  That ye brought hame wi' ye?"

"O whatten a man are ye," she said,
  "Fu' sair this marvels me;
I doubt ye are some keen warlock
  That wons out ower the sea.

"O come ye here for ills?" she says,
  "Or come ye for my good?
I doubt ye are some strong warlock
  That wons out ower the flood."

"My mither is lady of strange landis
  Stand far out ower the sea;
She witched me to a birdie's shape
  For the love of your body.

"My mither is queen of the witch-landis
  Lie baith to north and south;
She witched me to a birdie's body
  For the love of your goodly mouth.

"She can well of witches' work,
  She maketh baith mirth and meen;
She witched me to a little bird's body
  For the love of your twa grey een.

"It was a' for your yellow hair
  That I cam ower the sea;
And it was a' for your bonny mouth
  I took sic weird on me."

"O Coo-me-doo, my love sae true,
  Nae mair frae me ye'se gae.
The stanes shall fleet on the wan waters
  Before we twain be twey.

"O Coo-me-doo, my love sae true,
  It's time we were abed."
"O weel for you, my ain sweet thing,
  It's be as ye have said."

Then he's dwelt in her bower-chamber
  Fu' sax lang years and ane,
And seven fair sons she's borne to him,
  Fairer was there never nane.

The first bairn she's borne to him
  He's tane him ower the sea;
He's gien it to his auld mither,
  Bade well nourished it should be.

The seventh bairn she's borne to him,
  He's tane him frae his make;
He's gien it to his auld mither,
  Bade nourice it for his sake.

And he's dwelt in her bower-chamber
  Fu' six years thro' and three,
Till there is comen an auld grey knight
  Her wed-lord for to be;
She had nae will to his gowden gifts
  Nor wad she to his fee.

. . . . .

Out then spak the bonny bird,
  He heard what they did say;
Says: "Wae's be to you, ye auld grey man,
  For it's time I were away."

Then Coo-me-doo took flight and flew
  He flew out ower the sea;
He's lighted by his mither's castle-ha'
  On a tower of gold fu' hie.

. . . . .

MISCELLANEOUS POEMS



THE DEATH OF SIR JOHN FRANKLIN

"The unfriendly elements
Forget thee utterly—
Where, for a monument upon thy bones,
And e'er-remaining lamps, the belching whale
And humming water must o'erwhelm thy corpse;
Lying with simple shells."—PERICLES.

I

As one who having dreamed all night of death
Puts out a hand to feel the sleeping face
Next his, and wonders that the lips have breath—
So we, for years not touching on their trace,
Marvelled at news of those we counted dead,
"For now the strong snows in some iron place
Have covered them; their end shall not be said
Till all the hidden parts of time be plain
And all the writing of all years be read."
So men spake sadly; and their speech was vain,
For here the end stands clear, and men at ease
May gather the sharp fruit of that past pain
Out in some barren creek of the cold seas,
Where the slow shapes of the grey water-weed
Freeze midway as the languid inlets freeze.

II

This is the end. There is no nobler word
In the large writing and scored marge of time
Than such endurance is. Ear hath not heard
Nor hath eye seen in the world's bounded clime
The patience of their life, as the sharp years
And the slow months wrought out their rounded rhyme
No man made count of those keen hopes and fears,
Which were such labour to them, it may be;
That strong sweet will whereto pain ministers
And sharpest time doth service patiently.
Wrought without praise or failed without a name,
Those gulfs and inlets of the channelled sea
Hide half the witness that should fill with fame
Our common air in England, and the breath
That speech of them should kindle to keen flame
Flags in the midway record of their death.

III

Is this the end? is praise so light a thing
As rumour unto rumour tendereth
And time wears out of care and thanksgiving?
Then praise and shame have narrow difference,

If either fly with so displumèd wing
That chance and time and this imprisoned sense
Can maim or measure the spanned flight of it
By the ruled blanks of their experience,
Then only Fortune hath the scroll and writ
Of all good deeds our memory lives upon;
And the slack judgment of her barren wit
Appoints the award of all things that are done.

IV

The perfect choice and rarest of all good
Abides not in broad air or public sun;
Being spoken of, it is not understood;
Being shown, it has no beauty to be loved;
And the slow pulse of each man's daily blood
For joy thereat is not more quickly moved;
Itself has knowledge of itself, and is
By its own witness measured and approved;
Yea, even well pleasèd to be otherwise;
Nor wear the raiment of a good repute
Nor have the record of large memories.
Close leaves combine above the covered fruit;
Earth, that gives much, holds back her costliest;
And in blind night sap comes into the root;
Things known are good but hidden things are best.
Therefore, albeit we know good deeds of these,

Let no man deem he knows their worthiest.
He who hath found the measure of the seas,
And the wind's ways hath ruled and limited,
And knows the print of their wild passages,
The same may speak the praise of these men dead.
And having heard him we may surely know
There is no more to say than he hath said
And as his witness is the thing was so.

V

What praise shall England give these men her friends?
For while the bays and the large channels flow,
In the broad sea between the iron ends
Of the poised world where no safe sail may be,
And for white miles the hard ice never blends
With the chill washing edges of dull sea—
And while to praise her green and girdled land
Shall be the same as to praise Liberty—
So long the record of these men shall stand,
Because they chose not life but rather death,
Each side being weighed with a most equal hand,
Because the gift they had of English breath
They did give back to England for her sake,
Like those dead seamen of Elizabeth
And those who wrought with Nelson or with Blake

THE DEATH OF SIR JOHN FRANKLIN

To do great England service their lives long—
High honour shall they have; their deeds shall make
Their spoken names sound sweeter than all song.
This England hath not made a better man,
More steadfast, or more wholly pure of wrong
Since the large book of English praise began.
For out of his great heart and reverence,
And finding love too large for life to span,
He gave up life, that she might gather thence
The increase of the seasons and their praise.
Therefore his name shall be her evidence,
And wheresoever tongue or thought gainsays
Our land the witness of her ancient worth
She may make answer to the later days
That she was chosen also for this birth,
And take all honour to herself and laud,
Because such men are made out of her earth.
Yea, wheresoever her report is broad,
This new thing also shall be said of her
That hearing it, hate may not stand unawed—
That Franklin was her friend and minister;
So shall the alien tongue forego its blame,
And for his love shall hold her lovelier
And for his worth more worthy; so his fame
Shall be the shield and strength of her defence,
Since where he was can be not any shame.

VI

These things that are and shall abide from hence
It may be that he sees them now, being dead.
And it may be that when the smitten sense
Began to pause, and pain was quieted,
And labour almost kissed the lips of peace,
And sound and sight of usual things had fled
From the most patient face of his decease,
He saw them also then; we cannot say,
But surely when the painèd breath found ease
And put the heaviness of life away,
Such things as these were not estranged from him.
The soul, grown too rebellious to stay,
This shameful body where all things are dim,
Abode awhile in them and was made glad
In its blind pause upon the middle rim
Between the new life and the life it had,
This noble England that must hold him dear
Always, and always in his name keep sad
Her histories, and embalm with costly fear
And with rare hope and with a royal pride
Her memories of him that honoured her,
Was this not worth the pain wherein he died?
And in that lordly praise and large account
Was not his ample spirit satisfied?
He who slakes thirst at some uncleaner fount
Shall thirst again; but he shall win full ease
Who finds pure wells far up the painful mount.

VII

For the laborious time went hard with these
Among the thousand colours and gaunt shapes
Of the strong ice cloven with breach of seas,
Where the waste sullen shadow of steep capes
Narrows across the cloudy-coloured brine,
And by strong jets the angered foam escapes;
And a sad touch of sun scores the sea-line
Right at the middle motion of the noon
And then fades sharply back, and the cliffs shine
Fierce with keen snows against a kindled moon
In the hard purple of the bitter sky,
And thro' some rift as tho' an axe had hewn
Two spars of crag athwart alternately.
Flares the loose light of that large Boreal day
Down half the sudden heaven, and with a cry
Sick sleep is shaken from the soul away
And men leap up to see and have delight
For the sharp flame and strength of its white ray
From east to west burning upon the night;
And cliff and berg take fire from it, and stand
Like things distinct in customary sight,
And all the northern foam and frost, and all
The wild ice lying large to either hand;
And like the broken stones of some strange wall
Built to be girdle to the utmost earth,
Brow-bound with snows and made imperial,
Lean crags with coloured ice for crown and girth

Stand midway with those iron seas in face
Far up the straitened shallows of the firth.

VIII

So winter-bound in such disastrous place,
Doubtless the time seemed heavier and more hard
Than elsewhere in all scope and range of space,
Doubtless the backward thought and broad regard
Was bitter to their souls, remembering
How in soft England the warm lands were starred
With gracious flowers in the green front of spring,
And all the branches' tender over-growth,
Where the quick birds took sudden heart to sing;
And how the meadows in their sweet May sloth
Grew thick with grass as soft as song or sleep;
So, looking back, their hearts grew sere and loath
And their chafed pulses felt the blood to creep
More vexed and painfully; yea and this too
Possessed perchance their eyes with thirst to weep
More than green fields or the May weather's blue—

Mere recollection of all dearer things.
Slight words they used to say, slight work to do,
When every day was more than many springs,
And the strong April moved at heart, and made
Sweet mock at fortune and the seat of kings;
The naked sea and the bare lengths of land
And all the years that fade and grow and fade
Were pleasant years for them to live upon,
And time's gold raiment was not rent nor frayed;
But now they know not if such things be done,
Nor how the old ways and old places fare,
Nor whether there be change in the glad sun,
Defect and loss in all the fragrant air,
New feet are in the waymarks of their feet,
The bitter savour of remembered sweet
No doubt did touch their lips in some sharp guise,
No doubt the pain of thought and fever-heat
Put passion in the patience of their eyes.

IX

Yet in the edge and keenest nerve of pain,—
For such no comfort ever wholly dies,—
And as hurt patience healed and grew again,
This knowledge came, that neither land nor life
Nor all soft things whereof the will is fain
Nor love of friends nor wedded faith of wife

Nor all of these nor any among these
Make a man's best, but rather loss and strife,
Failure, endurance, and high scorn of ease,
Love strong as death and valour strong as love;
Therefore among the winter-wasted seas,
No flaw being found upon them to reprove,—
These whom God's grace, calling them one by one,
In unknown ways did patiently remove,
To have new heaven and earth, new air and sun,—
These chose the best, therefore their name shall be
Part of all noble things that shall be done,
Part of the royal record of the sea.

1858.

THE CUP OF GOD'S WRATH

I

DRINK deep and spare not: it is great and wide;
The corners of it are made thick with gold;
The wine of it was trodden out of old
In the wine-press of Egypt, where man's pride
Was in his purple raiment sewn and dyed,
And he grew lusty in God's sight, and bold.
The grapes of it were never bought or sold.
God's anger hath made red its throat and side;
Choice of quaint spices hath he mixed therein,
And poisoned honey of a bitter juice,
Under that heavy lid where it hath been
Covered like oil within a little cruise:
What man hath will to wet his lips between,
The wine is poured and trodden for his use.

II

As one mows down to burn dead grass and weeds
Wherein the corn was choked and overgrown,
So in Time's hand hath Change the sickle mown
An overgrowth of evil days and deeds;

And, as in meadows where the strong flame feeds,
  The land is waste and eaten to the bone
  In fields of dust with ashes overblown
To where the river trembles in its reeds,
So are the churches and broad halls burnt up;
  The priests and princes gathered into sheaves
    And bound for burning; such a fire begins
    The melting of gold pieces and gold sins,
  Ill treasure-traffic, the market-place of thieves,
For whose sake God shall pour out all his cup.

Oxford.

ECHO

IN the dusk of starlit hours
Thro' the woodland's dewy maze
Scattering music, scattering flowers
Down the glimmering forest ways,
O'er the smooth moss-paven level,
Past the mountain's windy brow,
Come the Nymphs in crowded revel,
Calling, Echo, Echo! where art thou?

By the far and misty glimmer
Of these pale Lethean lakes,
Whose dusk waves in twilight shimmer
When the faint Sun on them breaks,
Where no sorrowing thoughts appal thee,
Hast thou sought a place of sleep
Heeding not how loud we call thee—
Echo, Echo!—thro' the woodlands deep?

We have sought thee till the Hours,
Slowly darkening to the west,
Left thee turning funeral flowers
In some haunt of dreary rest,
Where the cloud of dewy tresses
On thy wan and downcast brow
Like a weight of sorrow presses;
Call aloud, Echo! Echo! where art thou?

In the soft green summer-meadows
Where the silent streams are flowing
In the happy woodland shadows
Where the softest winds are blowing,
Where amid their heapèd flowers
Children call thee soft and low,
In the hush of golden hours
Singing, Echo, Echo! where art thou?

When the wind-vext earth returneth
To the light of stormless days,
And the wide noon-splendour burneth
On the lustrous ocean-ways,
Still thou sittest weeping lowly
In the dim heart of the brakes,
In the silence wide and holy—
Echo, Echo!—which the deep wood makes.

Echo, Echo! we are weary
And the forest-path is long,
And the brightest glades are dreary
If unwaken'd by thy song.
Hark! her voice afar is singing—
O our sister, where art thou?
All the joyous words are ringing;
Be with us, Echo! Echo! hear us now.

Oxford.

DIES IRÆ

DAY of wrath, the years are keeping,
When the world shall rise from sleeping,
With a clamour of great weeping!

Earth shall fear and tremble greatly
To behold the advent stately
Of the Judge that judgeth straitly.

And the trumpet's fierce impatience
Scatter strange reverberations
Thro' the graves of buried nations.

Death and Nature will stand stricken
When the hollow bones shall quicken
And the air with weeping thicken.

When the Creature, sorrow-smitten,
Rises where the Judge is sitting
And beholds the doom-book written.

For, that so his wrath be slakèd,
All things sleeping shall be wakèd,
All things hidden shall be naked.

When the just are troubled for thee,
Who shall plead for me before thee,
Who shall stand up to implore thee?

Lest my great sin overthrow me,
Let thy mercy, quickened thro' me,
As a fountain overflow me!

For my sake thy soul was movèd;
For my sake thy name reprovèd,
Lose me not whom thou hast lovèd!

Yea, when shame and pain were sorest,
For my love the cross thou borest,
For my love the thorn-plait worest.

By that pain that overbore thee,
By those tears thou weptest for me,
Leave me strength to stand before thee.

For the heart within me yearneth,
And for sin my whole face burneth;
Spare me when thy day returneth.

By the Magdalen forgiven,
By the thief made pure for heaven,
Even to me thy hope was given.

Tho' great shame be heavy on me,
Grant thou, Lord, whose mercy won me,
That hell take not hold upon me.

DIES IRÆ

Thou whom I have lovèd solely,
Thou whom I have lovèd wholly,
Leave me place among the holy!

When thy sharp wrath burns like fire,
With the chosen of thy desire,
Call me to the crownèd choir!

Prayer, like flame with ashes blending,
From my crushed heart burns ascending;
Have thou care for my last ending.

Oxford.

AUTUMN RONDEL

FROM spring to fall the year makes merry
With days to days that chant and call:
With hopes to crown and fears to bury
With crowns of flowers and flowers for pall,
With bloom and song and bird and berry
That fill the months with festival
From spring to fall.

Who knows if ever skies were dreary
With shower and cloud and waterfall?
While yet the world's good heart is cheery,
Who knows if rains will ever brawl?
The storm thinks long, the winds wax weary,
Till winter comes to wind up all
From spring to fall.

A CAROL FOR CHARITY

WINTER, friend of health and wealth,
Hailed of goodly girls and boys,
Slays the poor by strength and stealth,
Makes their lives his lifeless toys.

One boy goes galloping over the moorland,
Wild with delight of the sunshine and speed,
Blithe as a bird on his bleak bright foreland,
Glad as the wind or his own glad steed.

One, with darkness and toil fast bound,
Bound in misery and iron fast,
Drags his nakedness underground,
Sees the mine as the world at last.

Winter, lord of laughing Yule,
Winter, weeping on his dead,
Bids us ease his iron rule,
Bids us bring his poor men bread.

A SONG FOR MARGARET MIDHURST

GOD send the sea sorrow
And all men that sail thorough.

God give the wild sea woe,
And all ships that therein go.

My love went out with dawn's light;
He went down ere it was night.

God give no live man good
That sails over the sea's flood.

God give all live men teen
That sail over the waves green.

God send for my love's sake
All their lovers' hearts break.

Many sails went over sea;
One took my heart from me.

All they, saving one,
Came in landward under the sun.

Many sails stood in from sea;
One twinned my heart and me.

A SONG FOR MARGARET MIDHURST

Waves white and waves black,
One sail they sent not back.

Many maidens laughed that tide;
I fell down and sore sighed.

Many mouths I saw kiss;
No man kissed there mine, I wis.

Many gat there brooch and glove;
I gat but loss of love.

I rose and sighed sore;
I set my face from the shore.

On my fingers fair gold rings,
In my heart bitter things.

In mine hair combs of pride,
I stood up and sore sighed.

I looked out over sea;
Never a man's eye looked to me.

I cried out over the tide;
Never a man's mouth on me cried.

I came there a goodly thing;
I was full wan ere evening.

I came there fresh and red;
I came thence like one dead.

I came there glad and lief;
I came thence with heart's grief.

God give all men grief, I say,
That sail over the seas grey.

I laid my head to the sea-stone;
I made my bed there alone.

I made my bed into the sand,
Betwixen sea and green land.

Betwixen land and green sea
Sorrows and sorrows fell on me.

In yellow sea-sand washen well,
Weary watches on me fell.

There all a night I lay:
I would I had died ere day.

There in the young light
I looked over the waves white.

There all a day I stood
Looking over the sea's flood.

I saw waves black and green,
But no man's sail between.

I saw waves blue and white,
But no sails under the light.

There was no wind passed me by,
But I was like to die.

I sought long and I sought sore,
And aye my tears fell more.

A SONG FOR MARGARET MIDHURST

I found sorrow and much pain,
But not my lover again.

God gave me a green bed
And no pillow to my head.

God gave me brief life's breath
And a good sleep after death.

LOVE AND SLEEP

I

LET me forget a little space,
O love, let love forget!
Or, if love will not let,
Blind thou with hair and hands his eyes and face;
Blind him and bind him, memory, tho' he fret,
And weep, and shift his place.

Thou seest how well the old loves sleep,
Each in a small sweet bed,
With flowers at foot and head,
Made out of griefs not grown enough to weep,
And joys so young their lips are hardly red,
And their hearts hardly leap.

Watch lest they wake, sweet Memory; set
A seal upon thy breath,
As one that sorroweth;
And hide thine eyes, and thou too shalt forget;
And sleep shall lead love by the hand to death,
And life be quiet yet.

LOVE AND SLEEP

II

HIDE thine eyes for all their light,
  Lest they come to weep;
Who shall say if day or night
  Be the best for sleep?

If by day they wake,
  Sorrow surely shall they see;
And for sorrow's sake
  Joyless all their joy shall be.

Sun shall set and moon shall rise
  Till the end of years,
But by night were never eyes
  Watched and shed not tears.

Look not forth to find
  Where thou never shalt find rest,
Lest thine eyes wax blind,
  Love is good, but sleep is best.

EVENING BY THE SEA

It was between the night and day,
  The trees looked weary—one by one
Against the west they seemed to sway,
  And yet were steady. The sad sun
In a sick doubt of colour lay
  Across the water's belt of dun.

On the weak wind scarce flakes of foam
  There floated, hardly borne at all
From the rent edge of water—some
  Between slack gusts the wind let fall,
The white brine could not overcome
  That pale grass on the southern wall.

That evening one could always hear
  The sharp hiss of the shingle, rent
As each wave settled heavier,
  The same rough way. This noise was blent
  With many sounds that hurt the air
  As the salt sea-wind came and went.

The wind wailed once and was not. Then
  The white sea touching its salt edge

EVENING BY THE SEA

Dropped in a slow low sigh: again
  The ripples deepened to the ledge,
Across the beach from marsh and fen
  Came a faint smell of rotten sedge.

Like a hurt thing that will not die
  The sea lay moaning; waifs of weed
Strove thro' the water painfully
  Or lay flat, like drenched hair indeed,
Rolled over with the pebbles, nigh
  Low places where the rock-fish feed.

SONG FOR CHASTELARD

THOUGH ye be never so fair a May
As Queen Marie that is so sweet,
I am so bounden in love's way
I may not go upon my feet.

Though ye be never so true a thing
As Saint Marie that is so clean,
Yet I am so taken in your loving
I wis ye be the better queen.

Though I be never so good in face
As Absalom that was callèd fair,
Give me so much of your least grace
As I may kiss your neck and hair.

Though I be never so wise a king
As Solomon that woned out south,
Do so much for me, good sweeting,
As I may kiss upon your mouth.

KING BAN

A FRAGMENT

THESE three held flight upon the leaning lands
At undern, past the skirt of misty camps
Sewn thick from Benwick to the outer march—
King Ban, and, riding wrist by wrist, Ellayne,
And caught up with his coloured swathing-
bands
Across her arm, a hindrance in the reins,
A bauble slipt between the bridle-ties,
The three months' trouble that was Launcelot.
For Claudas leant upon the land, and smote
This way and that way, as a pestilence
Moves with vague patience in the unclean heat
This way and that way; so the Gaulish war
Smote, moving in the marches. Then King Ban
Shut in one girdled waist of narrow stones
His gold and all his men, and set on them
A name, the name of perfect men at need,
And over them a seneschal, the man
Most inward and entailed upon his soul,
That next his will and in his pulses moved
As the close blood and purpose of his heart,
And laid the place between his hands, and rode

North to the wild rims of distempered sea
That, crossed to Logres, his face might look
red [*sic*]
The face of Arthur, and therein light blood
Even to the eyes and to the circled hair
For shame of failure in so near a need,
Failure in service of so near a man.
Because that time King Arthur would not ride,
But lay and let his hands weaken to white
Among the stray gold of a lady's head.
His hands unwedded: neither could bring help
To Ban that helped to rend his land for him
From the steel wrist of spoilers, but the time
A sleep like yellow mould had overgrown,
A pleasure sweet and sick as marsh-flowers.
Therefore about his marches rode King Ban
With eyes that fell between his hands to count
The golden inches of the saddle-rim,
Strange with rare stones; and in his face there
rose
A doubt that burnt it with red pain and fear
All over it, and plucked upon his heart,
The old weak heart that loss had eaten through,
Remembering how the seneschal went back
At coming out from Claudas in his tent;
And how they bound together, chin by chin,
Whispered and wagged, and made lean room for
words,
And a sharp mutter fed the ears of them.

And he went in and set no thought thereon
To waste; fear had not heart to fear indeed,
The king being old, since any fear in such
Is as a wound upon the fleshly sense
That drains a parcel of his time thereout,
Therefore he would not fear that as it fell
This thing should fall. For Claudas the keen thief
For some thin rounds and wretched stamps of gold
Had bought the tower and men and seneschal,
Body and breath and blood, yea, soul and shame.
They knew not this, at halt upon a hill.
Only surmise was dull upon the sense
And thin conjecture sickened in the speech;
So they fell silent, riding in the hills.
There on a little terrace the good king
Reined, and looked out. Far back the white lands lay;
The wind went in them like a broken man,
Lamely; the mist had set a bitter lip
To the rimmed river, and the moon burnt blank.
But outward from the castle of King Ban
There blew a sound of trouble, and there clomb
A fire that thrust an arm across the air,
Shook a rent skirt of dragging flame, and blanched
The grey flats to such cruel white as shone
Iron against the shadow of the sky

Blurred out with its blind stars; for as the sea
Gathers to lengthen a bleached edge of foam
Whole weights of windy water, and the green
Brine flares and hisses as the heap makes up,
Till the gaunt wave writhes, trying to breathe,
Then turns, and all the whited rims of steel
Lean over, and the hollowed round roars in
And smites the pebble forward in the mud,
And grinds the shingle in cool whirls of white,
Clashed through and crossed with blank assault
of foam,
Filled with hard thunder and drenched dregs of
sand—
So leant and leapt the many-mouthèd fire,
So curled upon the walls, dipt, crawled, smote,
clung,
Caught like a beast that catches on the flesh,
Waxed hoar with sick default, shivered across,
Choked out, a snake unfed.
Thereat King Ban
Trembled for pain in all his blood, and death
Under the heart caught him and made his breath
Wince, as a worm does, wounded in the head;
And fear began upon his flesh, and shook
The chaste and inly sufferance of it
Almost to ruin; a small fire and keen
Eating in muscle and nerve and hinge of joint
Perilous way; so bitter was the blow
Made on his sense by treason and sharp loss.

Then he fell weeping tears, with blood in them,
Like that red sweat that stained Gethsemane
With witness, when the deadly kiss had put
Shame on the mouth of Judas; and he cried,
Crying on God, and made out words and said:
Fair lord, sweet lord, most pleasant to all men,
To me so pleasant in clean days of mine
That now are rained upon with heavy rain,
Soiled with grey grime and with the dusty years,
Because in all those tourneys and hot things
I had to do with, in all riding times
And noise of work, and on smooth holidays
Sitting to see the smiting of hard spears,
And spur-smiting of steeds and wrath of men,
And gracious measure of the rounded game,
I held you in true honour and kept white
The hands of my allegiance as a maid's,
Being whole of faith and perfect in the will.
Therefore I pray you, O God marvellous,
See me how I am stricken among men,
And how the lip I fed with plenteousness
And cooled with wine of liberal courtesy
Turns a snake's life to poison me and clings—

. . . . .

THE WHITE MAID'S WOOING

"How will you woo her,
  This white maid of thine?
With breaking of wastel,
  Or pouring of wine?"

Not with pouring of cups
  Or with breaking of bread;
But with wood that is cloven,
  And wine that is red.

With rings will I woo her,
  With chains will I wed;
With ships that are broken,
  With blood that is shed.

Not with gold for a ring,
  Nor with kisses on lips,
But with slaying of sailors
  And breaking of ships.

"And how will you tame her,
  This mad maid of thine?
With kisses for seal,
  Or with gold for a sign?"

THE WHITE MAID'S WOOING

With a bit for the mouth,
  And a ring for the hand;
With a neck-chain of foam,
  Or a waist-chain of sand.

With the wind for a seal,
  And the sun for a sign;
And so I will wed her,
  This white wife of mine.

LANDOR AT FLORENCE

THE stateliest singing mouth that speaks our tongue,
The lordliest, and the brow of loftiest leaf
Worn after the great fashion close and brief,
Sounds and shines yet; to whom all braids belong
Of plaited laurel that no weathers wrong,
All increase of the spring and of the sheaf,
All high delight and godliness of grief,
All bloom and fume of summer and of song.
The years are of his household; Fate and Fame
Observe him; and the things of pestilence
Die out of fear, that could not die of shame,
Before his heel he set on their offence:
Time's hand shall hoard the gold of such a name
When death has blown the dust of base men thence.

1864.

SONNET

AH, face and hands and body beautiful,
  Fair tender body, for my body's sake
  Are you made faultless without stain or break.
Locks close as weed in river-water cool,
A purer throat and softer than white wool,
  Eyes where sleep always seems about to wake.
  No dead man's flesh but feels the strong sweet
ache,
And that sharp amorous watch the years annul,
If his grave's grass have felt you anywhere.
  Rain and the summer shadow of the rain
Are not so gentle to the generous year
  As your soft rapid kisses are to men,
Felt here about my face, yea here and here,
  Caught on my lips and thrown you back
again.

GENTLE SPRING

WRITTEN FOR A PICTURE BY FREDERICK SANDYS

O VIRGIN Mother! of gentle days and nights,
Spring of fresh buds and spring of soft delights,
Come, with lips kissed of many an amorous hour,
Come, with hands heavy from the fervent flower,
The fleet first flower that feels the wind and sighs,
The tenderer leaf that draws the sun and dies;
Light butterflies like flowers alive in the air
Circling and crowning thy delicious hair,
And many a fruitful flower and floral fruit
Born of thy breath and fragrant from thy foot.
Thee, Mother, all things born desire, and thee
Earth and the fruitless hollows of the sea
Praise, and thy tender winds of ungrown wing
Fill heaven with murmurs of the sudden spring.

1865.

Fred. Why should it hurt you that he goes
to Rome?
Now I am glad; I can sit close to you,
Feel my hand put away and lost in yours,
And the sweet smell of your long knotted hair
Laid on my face and mouth; can kiss you too
And not be smitten; that is good for me.
Con. Poor child, I love you; yea, keep close
by me
So am I safe. Ah! yet no woman here
Would pity; keep you closer to me, boy!
Fred. Is not this well? now I can touch your
sleeve,
Count over the thick rings and fair round stones
About your neck and forehead, and on mine
Lay down the soft palm of your smooth long
hand;
If I were as my father I would reach
Both hands up—so—to bow your head quite
down,
Pulled by the hair each side, till I could touch
The rows of gracious pearl that part your hair.
Then I would kiss you, your lips would move to
cry

And I would make them quiet; ah! but now
I cannot reach your lips—not so! alas,
And then they shiver and curl sideways, see,
And your eyes cry too.
Con. There—sit gravelier now!
Nay, child, you twist my finger in the ring.
Fred. I wonder if God means to leave us so?
If he forget us, and my father die,
How well that were for you! dear mother, think
How we would praise him!
Con. Child, no words of it,
Let us forget him. Come, I'll spoil a tale,
With idle remembrance. There was a king once
Lived where the trees are great and green, with leaves
The white midwinter keeps alive; there grew
All red fruit and all flowers full of gold
In the broad low grasses: from the poppy-root
Came lilies, and from lily-stems there clomb
Tall roses, with close petals, and the stalk
Was heavy gold, solid and smooth, the wind
Was full of soft rain gathered in the dusk
That fell with no clouds near; so this king
Grew past a child.
Fred. Taller than I? so tall?
Con. Ay, where the sun divides the olive-shade;
And on his head——Rise, here are men, I think.

Enter *Massimo* and *Lucrezia.*

Mas. What do these here? Hush! now,
Madam, I pray you,
Though we put on some outer show of man,
Think us no more than beast: What certainty
is there
Or in our faces, in our brows' mould, or
In the clear shape and colour of our speech,
Sets this word man upon us? We, as you,
Are the king's ware, his good necessities;
(I'll teach you shortly what this babble means,
Fear we not there) good chattels of his use
For one to handle; I beseech you, let not
The outside of our speech condemn us; else
Had we kept mouth shut ever.
Con. My fair lord,
I know not what ungracious day of mine
Hath given you tongue against me.
Fred. What says he, mother?
May I not kill him? tho' he speaks so high,
This is no father: I may kill him then?
Con. Hush, boy! this insolence has changed
you. Sir,
I pray you let me understand; you said
(I think) and there was a secret in your speech
I must unriddle. Lady Lucrezia,
What madness hurts our friend? he speaks awry
With a most broken action.

Fred. Speak, sir: I
Stand for my mother.
Mas. So you have set him words
To work out, to spell over, each as loud
As any threat the mouth makes like a blow?
Ay, must his father praise him too?
Luc. My lord,
It seems that change can make the face of hope
Grey as his own thin hair; I loved you well,
Put honour on you, which you seemed to wear
With natural apprehension and keen grace
Past blame of any, over praise of me:
Now either my hurt sense is sick to death,
Or I conceive such meaning in your talk
As makes me faint with shame; I would fain be angry;
But shame has left me bare of even will
To seem so angry, and to say this out
With your set eyes so fast upon my face
Grows like shame to me.
Mas. Nathless I believe
Since you shook hands with shame's last messenger
And felt her hand's mark hot long your cheek,
Some years have made it whiter.
Luc. Pardon me!
I know not, Madam, what he speaks.
Mas. Nor you?
I spoke to Tancred's kinswoman, the queen

Who wears the blood of holy centuries
In her fair palms and forehead; their blue
curves
Royally written; nay this boy's soft lip
So red and fair by that imperial sign,
By your most gracious warrant; else I'll say
The name you had was bastarded, and you
Some wicked season's error.
Luc. Are you mad?
See, her mouth trembles, tears drop over it,
Her brows move: now, be silent!
Mas. Then I'll end!
I held this lady so past service, yea
Past man's approval or the keenest feet
Of his obedience: You're my kinswoman,
And the dear honour that I have of you
Hath borne some witness; now for her, I'll say
I would forget you, and unclothe my soul
Of its strong reverence and opinion
That makes you to me as the music is
To the dead eithern there, as the live smell
To some quick flower midways the lily-row.
So I hold you—well, I'd forget all this
To serve her; that was Lady Constance here,
When she was no mere German ornament
Scrawled broad with some gold flourishes at top
Above some Austrian document to prove
Our lord a liar, some stale letter, says
To be just fingered by Pope Celestin

Before he tears it, tears her name and all,
No witness of that devil's assurance made
Between our masters, that strong bond that holds
Treason each side—no empress of this mould,
But just the lady we had just to serve,
Live by or die for—oh, not when she bade
But when God thought she might have need of
him
Tancred's own blood, the king's own very flesh
Made for our sakes so beautiful and weak
That we might even help God by serving her—
The maiden face more gracious than was need
To keep it perfect—yea, more love in the lip
Than what sufficed us to accredit her
As only Constance, more repose i' the eyes
Than had alone constrained her worship out—
For certes no man ever wondered much
Why she wants worship! (to complete her, say)
And what were love's work? yea, thus verily
God wrought her with good cunning; and our
part
Was to be patient—some day this might end,
She might pray God to find us room, suppose—
So many as we were, and such poor blood
As this might wash her floorèd palace clean—
I talk that old way! See how pale she is,
Her eyes more narrow, and with shallow lights
Filling them, broken hints of purposes,
How pain has worn the golden secret out

Some strange grand language wrote upon her face.
All this more wasted than a flame that fails
On sick lamp lit at daybreak—more rebuked,
Chastened and beaten by the imperious time,
Than my words last year spoken!
Con. Oh, not so:
Not the soul—let the body wear so thin
Each feature shows of it by this——
Mas. I said
No man's change that we are ruled by does much harm,
God overlines it, shall not the queen live?
But this so new and bitter thing to taste
That poisons me—this curse that changes her—
I saw not ever.
Con. This—
Mas. That you should turn
A woman none of those men pay to find
The costliness of such a golden sin
As loves by hire and loves not—no such thing
Would praise or pity, would despise or hate—
A shame familiar on the pander's lip,
Smiled out by courtiers from their slippery mouth,
Laughed over, chattered over by the page
A groom might spit on—handled, breathed upon
By the spent breath in his mid office worn
As garb and badge of his necessity
On one permitted shoulder, by this king . . .

POPE CELESTIN AND GIORDANO

Gio. THESE matters are but shadows of the truth,
Mean indications; time will shew, my lord,
Our wrong lies deeper.
Cel. Proofs—ay, proofs you say—
Let me see that, sir: I'll believe your proof:
What must I do? what stirs you up to give
This dead dissension teeth to bite again?
And I am old; my body is no wall
For you to shoot behind at emperors:
Ay, the keen spirit eats the flesh like fire,
It's mere slow poison, this my dignity,
Consumes me; ah, you're just a man, my Count,
Cannot conceive how God's will overcomes,
How the Church bears one's very soul to hold
And stoops the shoulders; then, we're set to pray
Save you your souls, gather you fruit of prayer,
Not whet you fresh blades when blood mars the old:
Ah, what must we do?
Gio. But, your Holiness
Imagines not we seek your wrong in this:

Our words are meant to save God's Church and
you
From this man's red and insolent hands, put
forth
To pluck you out of kingdom, set you up
But as a dead thing, as a monument
That boys may spit at. Sir, if you speak of peace,
Best cover up the face of you and weep
Till he be here: it may be he will say
"Throw me that hoar scalp to the dogs," or else
"Nay, find him some low cell not overbroad
And slip the chain's knot close enough to press
The lean old wrist and elbow:" this may be.
Cel. This! Oh, God help me, but how cold
it gets!
Why—but I think, by Venus, it's no spring
But winter comes to pinch us by the chin.
—Are not we vicar of the Son of God?
Are not we lord of you and him? Ha, see
How the flames twinkle when my hand goes up!
The fingers are but lank as sprays of wood
In the late snow-time, eh, or blades embrowned
On some lean field this bitter March—see,
Count,
This grey hair comes on all! ay, well I know
The blessèd tonsure came on it before—
Ay, thin scalp, said you! yea, but, sir, no Count
Keeps always dark hair, not so thick as yours,
God help it!

Gio. I beseech your Holiness
Even by the sweet blood of your Lord the Christ,
Believe me this is perilous to say:
You talk of things that either you must kill
Or they will smite you on the sacred face,
Discredit you, despoil the chosen gold
On the dear bosom of this mother Church,
Uncover——
Cel. Ah, sir, tell me not of these!
An old man—ere the blessèd knife had shorn
One black top curl, I might have answered you;
I was too young—eh well, suppose men talk,
What matter? there's a lie in each man's mouth.
Yea "dixi" said God's blessed Psalmist once
"Dixi," that's where the choir breaks out full
breath,
Makes half the sweet smoke ripple graciously,
Praising God's mother in delicious wise.
Ah, sir, be very tender of such words;
The trampled flesh is like a hurt snake's head
Most quick to peer up sharply—ah, sir, then
It stings the blood thro', verily!
Gio. My lord—
Cel. Ay, then begins to stir and strike and
more
God keep us—worries as with angry teeth,
This sensual serpent of the evil flesh,
With its bruised head alive and such keen eyes
And such a large mouth with lean lips astir.

Ah, sir, be very tender of the flesh!
Gold said you, gold? there was hair once she had
Most like a Byzant painter makes
For some saint's face—alas, the hair she had
Which now red worms have eaten to the roots!
Ah, flesh is weaker than a rich man's breath,
An old man's hand with fingers shut like these—
The mouth she had which years ago black earth
Filled to the lips that used to kiss me once,
Which Mary pardon! so shall I too die
And have my body eaten of cold worms
As Herod—so Christ pardon me the sin!
Gold said you, on her bosom? ah, she wore
An armlet of thin gold, and on her neck
There was a plait she had of threaded yellow silk—
And all this has been done with many years,
And will not come again. I grow so old,
So old and sick, alas the evil flesh!

Gio. I told your Holiness of Henry's aim,
His aim assured and evident, to seize
The Church lands and the Church's wealth, if you
Confirm not, sir, his tyrannous dignity
By the mere seal of strong permission: think
I do beseech you by Queen Mary's might,
What shame, what utter peril there should be
If this thing fall! That henceforth one may say

Trust in the Church and trust, and find no
place
Where truth makes head against the violent
world—
If you do this: yea, men will violate
Things hidden with securest insolence;
So that between the slayer's bearded mouth
And the chaste lip of reverence there will be
Even such communion as the traitor's kiss,
A present lie for ever.
Cel. Ay, woe's me,
A lie to say—a very bitter lie
To take upon the tongue we pray withal.
Alas, sir, while God keeps us scant of grace,
The body and the body's frail thin sense
Is liable to most dangerous attributes,
Is vulnerable to any sword of sins,
To any craft of Satan's; we should think
We are made of most frail body and weak soul
Mere tools for diabolic usages,
For ministration of man's enemy
Whom God confound! nathless it hath been kept
I say, sir, there be men have seldom sinned
Since the pure vow made clean their fleshly lips:
To God ascribe the praise, my son, not me;
Yea, be it written for me in God's book
What have I done—whereof I take but blame
Seeing there is no profit in me, none,
Nor in my service: verily I think

The keeper of God's house is more than I,
Who have but served him these hoar eighty years
With barren service.
Gio. (Ay, past help of mine!)
I pray you then, my lord, that of your grace
I may speak with the Cardinal Orsino
As in your name; he loves me well, there's none
Of more swift judgment and deliberate act,
Nor who serves justice better.
Cel. Yea, my lord,
You shall have letters to the cardinal;
A good man, who hath slain the flesh of sin—
A good man, certainly no son of Christ
Hath done more service, is more ripe for grace.
He hath looked seldom on the evil thing
To hunger for it in the bond of lust
Or violence of the keen iniquitous will:
I'll send him letters—yea, a man of grace,
A pillar fairly carven of wrought stone
All builded without hammer, clean and fair
To do God honour, and accredit us
The builder of him: for his judgment, sir,
That shall you test, but all grow old in time.
Ay, soon or late God fashions us anew
By some good patterns; so shall all get made
Fit to be welded stone by shapen stone
Into the marvellous Jerusalem wall
That shall be builded. A good man, I said,

But somewhat older than he was, meseems,
That shall you notice; let him not suspect
That I misdoubt him, sir; he hath been wise
Fulfilled of grace and wisdom: but our time
Is as a day—as half a day with God:
Yea, as a watch that passeth in the night
And is not honoured. Come, sir, you shall go:
I pray God prosper you, and overcome
The evil of your body, by his grace.
Also the Cardinal, that he may speak
Things worthy, which shall worthily be heard
For without wisdom are we as the grass
Which the sun withers: yea, our sojourn here
Is as a watch that passeth in the night.

IN THE TWILIGHT

LORD, is it daytime or night?
  Failure, Lord, or success?
Speak to us, answer us, thou:
Surely the light of thy brow
Gave us, giveth us, light,
Dark be the season or bright,
  Strong to support or suppress.

Thou, with eyes to the east,
  Beautiful, vigilant eyes;
Father, Comforter, Chief,
Joy be it with us or grief,
Season of funeral or feast,
Careful of thine, of thy least,
  Careful who lives and who dies.

Soul and Spirit of all,
  Keeping the watch of the world,
All through the night-watches, there
Gazing through turbulent air
Standest; how shall we fall?
What should afflict or appal,
  Though the streamers of storm be unfurled?

All the noise of the night,
  All the thunder of things,
All the terrors be hurled
Of the blind brute-force of the world,
All the weight of the fight,
All men's violent might,
  All the confluence of Kings;

Rouse all earth against us,
  Hurl all heaven against thee?
Though it be thus, though it were,
Speak to us, if thou be there,
Save, tho' indeed it be thus
Then that the dolorous
  Stream sweeps off to the sea.

Lift up heads that are hidden,
  Strengthen hearts that are faint;
Lighten on eyes that are blind
To the poor of thy kind,
Courage their lives over-ridden,
Smitten how sorely and chidden
  Sharply with reins of restraint.

Peace, it may be he will say,
  Somewhat, if yet ye will hear
Some great word of a chief
Ask not of joy, neither grief,

IN THE TWILIGHT

Ask nothing more of the day,
Not whether night be away,
  Not whether comfort be near.

Seek not after a token;
  Ask not what of the night,
Nor what the end of it brings:
Seek after none of these things.
What though nothing were spoken,
Nothing, though all we were broken,
  Shewn as seen of the light?

What if the morning awake
  Never of us to be seen?
Yet, if we die, if we live,
That which we have will we give,
That which is with us we take,
Borne in our hands for her sake
  Who shall be and is and hath been.

She though we die we shall find
  Surely, though far she be fled,
Nay, if we find not at last,
We, though we die and go past,
Yet shall we leave her behind,
Leave to the sons of our kind
  Men that come after us dead.

These shall say of us then;
  "Freedom they had not as we,

Yet were none of them slaves;
Free they lie in their graves,
Our fathers, the ancient of men,
Souls that awake not again
  Free, as we living were free."

Then, if remembrance remain,
  Shall we not seeing have said
Out of the place where we lie
Hearing, rejoice and reply;
Men of a world without stain
Sons of men that in vain
  Lie not for love of you dead.

1867.

CHANSON DE FÉVRIER

TRESSONS ma guirlande
D'ix et de cyprès,
Bien belle est la lande,
Bien verts sont les près.

Faites-moi ma bière,
Mettez-m'y ce soir:
Bien triste est la terre,
Le tombeau bien noir.

Qu'il aille aimer Rose;
L'amour lui sied bien;
Elle a toute chose,
Et moi je n'ai rien.

Des nattes de soie
Qu'on rehausse en tour;
Des yeux pleins de joie
Et vides d'amour.

Quand son cou se cambre,
Tous ses grands cheveux
Cousus d'or et d'ambre
Tombent sur ses yeux.

De l'Eure à la Sambre,
  On ne vit jamais
Si beaux cheveux d'ambre,
  Si beaux yeux de jais.

Je n'ai rien à dire;
  J'ai gardé ma foi.
Sa bouche sait rire;
  Je sais pleurer, moi.

La lune était belle;
  Mais le jour a lui.
Que nous voulait-elle
  Quand j'étais à lui?

Vous verrez éclose,
  Quand mai le veut bien,
Vous verrez la rose,
  Je ne verrai rien.

Les jours où l'on cueille
  L'hyacinthe au pré,
Et la chèvrefeuille,
  Moi je dormirai.

Que dit la colombe?
  Vivez, aimez-vous:
Bien douce est la tombe,
  Le gazon bien doux.

CHANSON DE FÉVRIER

Mais quand l'hirondelle
  Chante aux champs de mai
Va, lui dira-t-elle,
  Tu fus bien aimé.

CHANSON D'AVRIL

TRESSEZ ma couronne
  Des fleurs de roseau.
Tu me dis: Sois bonne,
  Je te dis: Sois beau.

Ecoute: tu m'aimes,
  La belle aux beaux yeux;
Allons par nous-mêmes,
  Allons deux à deux.[1]

Nous irons, ma chère,
  Au fond du verger:
Tu seras bergère,
  Je serai berger.

Tais-toi donc, mignonne,
  Il faut s'apaiser
Quand on est si bonne,
  Si bonne à baiser.

[1] This line must be a slip. "Allons deux à deux" suggests a procession of couples, not a single pair. The couplet is perhaps the least French in the poem.—[E. G.]

CHANSON D'AVRIL

La roseau qui penche
  Est moins doux, moins frais;
Moins belle, moins blanche,
  La rose des près.

Que dit l'hirondelle?
  Le jour va périr:
Aimons-nous, ma belle,
  Avant de mourir.

Aimons-nous, ma mie:
  Viens, écoute, vois;
Songe que la vie
  Ne vient qu'une fois.

Veux-tu que je meure,
  Vraiment, sans amour?
Nous vivons une heure
  Nous mourrons un jour.

THAW

A FRAGMENT

THIS winter's white is no more strong than snow
Against the red of spring in buds and beams,
In sun and shoot refilled with fluent fire
And heart of lusty labour and large life.
Already the lean hoar-frost is deflowered
Of half its breathless blossom of thin leaves
Wrought false on glass, and that glass not so
frail;
Already the split ice yearns, and now the thaw
Begins on every river and unsealed well;
The snow shudders against the sun, the hills
Warm them with morning. What shall noon
do next?

1871.



BALLAD OF THE FAIR HELMET-MAKER TO THE GIRLS OF JOY

FROM VILLON

Now think hereof, fair Gloveress,
That wast my scholar constantly,
And you too, Blanche the Cobbleress,
'Tis time to walk now warily,
Take right and left; I pray you, see
Ye spare no man in any place;
For old girls keep no currency,
No more than coin cried down for base.

And you, my dainty Flesheress,
So light in dance of heel and knee,
And Winifred the Weaveress,
Despise not low your master free;
Ye too must shut up shop, all ye
When ye wax old and bleak of face;
Of no more use than old priests be,
No more than coin cried down for base.

Take heed too, Joan the Hatteress,
That no fiend lime your liberty;
No more, fair Kate, the Spurrieress,
Bid men go hang or pack to sea;

For whoso lacks her beauty, she
  Gets scorn of them, and no good grace,
Foul age takes no man's love for fee,
  No more than coin cried down for base.

Girls, hearken and give heed to me,
  Why thus I wail and weep my case
'Tis that I find no remedy,
  No more than coin cried down for base.

1872.

RECOLLECTIONS

YEARS have sped from us under the sun
Through blossom and snow-tides twenty-one,
Since first your hand as a friend's was mine,
In a season whose days are yet honey and wine
To the pale close lips of Remembrance, shed
By the cupbearer Love for desire of the dead:
And the weeds I send you may half seem flowers
In eyes that were lit by the light of its hours.
For the life (if at all there be life) in them grew
From the sun then risen on a young day's dew,
When ever in August holiday times
I rode or swam through a rapture of rhymes,
Over heather and crag, and by scaur and by stream,
Clothed with delight by the might of a dream,
With the sweet sharp wind blown hard through my hair,
On eyes enkindled and head made bare,
Reining my rhymes into royal order
Through honied leagues of the northland border;
Or loosened a song to seal for me
A kiss on the clamorous mouth of the sea.

So swarmed and sprang, as a covey they start,
The song-birds hatched of a hot glad heart,
With notes too shrill and a windy joy
Fluttering and firing the brain of a boy,
With far keen echoes of painless pain
Beating their wings on his heart and his brain,
Till a life's whole reach, were it brief, were it long,
Seemed but a field to be sown with song.

The snow-time is melted, the flower-time is fled,
That were one to me then for the joys they shed.
Joys in garland and sorrows in sheaf,
Rose-red pleasure and gold-eared grief,
Reared of the rays of a mid-noon sky,
I have gathered and housed them, worn and put by,
These wild-weed waifs with a wan green bloom
Found in the grass of that old year's tomb,
Touched by the gleam of it, soiled with its dust,
I well could leave in the green grave's trust,
Lightly could leave in the light wind's care
Were all thoughts dead of the dead life there.
But if some note of its old glad sound
In your ear should ring as a dream's rebound,
As a song, that sleep in his ear keeps yet,
Tho' the senses and soul rewaking forget.

RECOLLECTIONS

To none so fitly the sprays I send
Could come as at hail of the hand of a friend.

1878.

It is evident that "Recollections" was addressed to W. B. Scott, and was intended as the Dedication to *Poems and Ballads: Second Series,* 1878, but was held back when Swinburne recollected his promise to dedicate that volume to Richard Burton. *Poems and Ballads: Third Series,* 1889, was inscribed to Scott in a poem which contains two lines that occur in "Recollections."—[E. G.]

SAIREY GAMP'S ROUNDEL

A BABY'S thumb, the little duck's,
Is fitter food than crust or crumb,
In baby's mouth when baby sucks
A baby's thumb.
It gives delight to all and some
Who wish the child the best of lucks
That ever to a child may come.

Its mien is pleasanter than Puck's,
Its air triumphant, placid, dumb,
Benignant, bland, when baby sucks
A baby's thumb.

NOTE.—In sending this roundel to his sister Isabel, on the 19th of February, 1883, Swinburne accompanied it with a note, of which only a fragment is preserved:—

"MY DEAREST ABBA,

"The preceding burst of lyric song, in Sairey's very best handwriting, was composed by that lady a day or two ago while dredging, and wrote down faithful before breakfast; which she do hope it may give satigefaction to Mrs. Harris—whose 'Eavenly dispogicion is well-beknown—and her family circle."

TO A LEEDS POET

(J. W. INCHBOLD)

If far beyond the shadow of the sleep
A place there be for souls without a stain;
Where peace is perfect and delight more deep
Than seas or skies that change and shine again,

There, none of all unsullied souls that live
May hold a surer station, none may lend
More light to Hope or Memory's lamp, nor give
More joys than Thine to those that called
Thee Friend.

1888.

SONNET

HIGH thought and hallowed love, by faith made one,
Begat and bare the sweet strong-hearted child,
Art, nursed of nature: earth and sea and sun
Saw nature then more godlike as she smiled.
Life smiled on death, and death on life: the soul
Between them shone, and soared above their strife,
And left on time's unclosed and starry scroll
A sign that quickened death to deathless life.

Peace rose like Hope, a patient queen, and bade
Hell's first-born Faith abjure her creed and die,
And Love, by life and death made sad and glad,
Gave Conscience ease, and watched Good Will pass by.
All these make music now of one man's name
Whose life and age are one with love and fame.



ÆOLUS

LORD of days and nights that hear thy word of wintry warning,
Wind, whose feet are set on ways that none may tread,
Change the nest wherein thy wings are fledged for flight by morning,
Change the harbour whence at dawn thy sails are spread.

Not the dawn, ere yet the imprisoning night has half released her,
More desires the sun's full face of cheer, than we,
Well as yet we love the strength of the iron-tongued north-easter,
Yearn for wind to meet us as we front the sea.

All thy ways are good, O wind, and all the world should fester,
Were thy fourfold godhead quenched, or stilled thy strife:
Yet the waves and we desire too long the deep south-wester,
Whence the waters quicken shoreward, clothed with life.

Yet the field not made for ploughing save of keels nor harrowing
Save of storm-winds lies unbrightened by thy breath:
Banded broad with ruddy samphire glow the seabanks narrowing
Westward, while the sea gleams chill and still as death.

Sharp and strange from inland sounds thy bitter note of battle,
Blown between grim skies and waters sullen-souled,
Till the baffled seas bear back, rocks roar and shingles rattle,
Vexed and angered and anhungered and acold.

Change thy note, and give the waves their will, and all the measure,
Full and perfect, of the music of their might,
Let it fill the bays with thunderous notes and throbs of pleasure,
Shake the shores with passion, sound at once and smite.

Sweet are even the mild low notes of wind and sea, but sweeter
Sounds the song whose choral wrath or raging rhyme

ÆOLUS

Bids the shelving shoals keep tune with storm's
imperious metre,
Bids the rocks and reefs respond in rapturous
chime.

Sweet the lisp and lulling whisper and luxurious
laughter,
Soft as love or sleep, of waves whereon the sun
Dreams, and dreams not of the darkling hours
before nor after,
Winged with cloud whose wrath shall bid
love's day be done.

Yet shall darkness bring the awakening sea a
lordlier lover,
Clothed with strength more amorous and
more strenuous will,
Whence her heart of hearts shall kindle and her
soul recover
Sense of love too keen to lie for love's sake
still.

Let thy strong south-western music sound, and
bid the billows
Brighten, proud and glad to feel thy scourge
and kiss
Sting and soothe and sway them, bowed as aspens
bend or willows,
Yet resurgent still in breathless rage of bliss.

All to-day the slow sleek ripples hardly bear up shoreward,
Charged with sighs more light than laughter, faint and fair,
Like a woodland lake's weak wavelets lightly lingering forward,
Soft and listless as the slumber-stricken air.

Be the sunshine bared or veiled, the sky superb or shrouded,
Still the waters, lax and languid, chafed and foiled,
Keen and thwarted, pale and patient, clothed with fire or clouded,
Vex their heart in vain, or sleep like serpents coiled.

Thee they look for, blind and baffled, wan with wrath and weary,
Blown for ever back by winds that rock the bird:
Winds that seamews breast subdue the sea, and bid the dreary
Waves be weak as hearts made sick with hope deferred.

Let thy clarion sound from westward, let the south bear token
How the glories of thy godhead sound and shine:

ÆOLUS

Bid the land rejoice to see the land-wind's broad wings broken,
Bid the sea take comfort, bid the world be thine.

Half the world abhors thee beating back the sea, and blackening
Heaven with fierce and woful change of fluctuant form:
All the world acclaims the shifting sail again, and slackening
Cloud by cloud the close-reefed cordage of the storm.

Sweeter fields and brighter woods and lordlier hills than waken
Here at sunrise never hailed the sun and thee:
Turn thee then, and give them comfort, shed like rain and shaken
Far a foam that laughs and leaps along the sea.

TO JAMES McNEIL WHISTLER

FLY away, butterfly, back to Japan,
Tempt not a pinch at the hand of a man,
  And strive not to sting ere you die away.
So pert and so painted, so proud and so pretty,
To brush the bright down from your wings were
                                a pity—
  Fly away, butterfly, fly away!

1888.

THE BALLADE OF TRUTHFUL CHARLES

CHARLES STUART, the crownless king whose hand
Sways Erin's sceptre,—so they sing,
The bards of holy Liarland—
Can give his tongue such scope and swing,
So smooth of speech, so sure of sting,
That all who feel its touch must dread it:
But now we hear it witnessing—
"I meant to cheat you when I said it."

Base England felt his vocal brand
Burn on her blushless brow, and cling
Like fire: though grave and calm and bland,
His voice could touch so deep a string,
That souls more pure than flowers in spring
Were moved to follow where he led; it
Rang out so true: we hear it ring—
"I meant to cheat you when I said it."

Convinced, appalled, confused, unmanned,
We see, splashed black with mud they fling,
Parnells and Pigotts lie or stand;
We see their faith, how pure a thing,

Their cause, how past all challenging;
We read their creed, as Gladsniff read it
And worshipped. Then a word takes wing—
"I meant to cheat you when I said it."

PRINCE of pure patriots, "blameless king,"
Is this conducive to your credit?
No shift, no plea but this to bring?
"I meant to cheat you when I said it."

NEW YEAR'S EVE, 1889

No Englishman will need to be reminded of the date on which Westminster Abbey was honoured by the funeral of Robert Browning.—A.C.S.

ALL the west, whereon the sunset sealed the dead
year's glorious grave
Fast with seals of light and fire and cloud
that light and fire illume,
Glows at heart and kindles earth and heaven
with joyous blush and bloom
Warm and wide as life, and glad of death which
only slays to save.
As a tide-reconquered sea-rock lies aflush with
the influent wave,
Lies the light aflush with darkness, lapped
about with lustrous gloom,
Even as life with death, and time with fame,
and memory with the tomb
Where a dead man hath for vassals Fame the
serf and Time the slave.
Far from earth as heaven, the steadfast light
withdrawn, superb, suspense,
Burns in dumb divine expansion of illimitable
flower:

Moonrise whets the shadows' edges keen as noon-
tide: hence and thence
Glows the presence from us passing, shines
and passes not the power.
Souls arise whose word remembered is as spirit
within the sense:
All the hours are theirs of all the seasons:
death has but his hour.

THE CENTENARY OF SHELLEY

Now a hundred years agone among us came
Down from some diviner sphere of purer flame,
Clothed in flesh to suffer, maimed of wings to soar,
One whom hate once hailed as now love hails by name,
Chosen of love as chosen of hatred. Now no more
Ear of man may hear or heart of man deplore
Aught of dissonance or doubt that mars the strain
Raised at last of love where love sat mute of yore.
Fame is less than love, and loss is more than gain,
When the sweetest souls and strongest, fallen in fight,
Slain and stricken as it seemed in base men's sight,
Rise and lighten on the graves of foeman slain,
Clothed about with love of all men as with light,
Suns that set not, stars that know not day from night.

1892.

THE CONCERT OF EUROPE

SHARP the concert wrought of discord shrills
the tune of shame and death,
Turk by Christian fenced and fostered, Mecca
backed by Nazareth:
All the powerless powers, tongue-valiant,
breathe but greed's or terror's breath.

Though the tide that feels the west wind lift it,
wave by widening wave,
Wax not yet to height and fullness of the storm
that smites to save,
None shall bid the flood back seaward till no
bar be left to brave.

March 1st, 1897.

MEMORIAL ODE ON THE DEATH OF LECONTE DE LISLE

On the first of June 1885, the greatest poet of the nineteenth century was borne to his rest amid the lamentations and the applause of his countrymen, and of all to whom either the example of a noble life or the triumph of a genius inaccessible and unapproachable seemed worthy of honour and regard. Many earnest and cordial and admirable words of tribute and thanksgiving and farewell were uttered over the hearse of Victor Hugo; none more memorable than those in which a great poet became the spokesman of all his kind in honour of the greatest of them all. Short and simple as was the speech of M. Leconte de Lisle, none of the longer and more elaborate orations was more genuinely eloquent, more seriously valuable, than the admirably terse and apt expression of gratitude and reverence with which he bade "farewell and hail" in the name of all surviving poets to their beloved and beneficent master. Nor could a fitter and a worthier spokesman have been imagined or desired by the most exacting or the most ambitious devotion or design.—A.C.S.

I

BESIDE the lordliest grave in all the world,
A singer crowned with golden years and fame
Spake words more sweet than wreaths of incense curled,
That bade an elder yet and mightier name

Hail, for whose love the wings of time were furled,
And death that heard it died of deadlier shame.

Our father and lord of all the sons of song,
Hugo, supreme on earth, had risen above
Earth, as the sun soars noonward: grief and wrong
Had yielded up their part in him to love;
And one man's word came forth upon the throng
Brief as the brooding music of the dove.

And he now too, the praiser as the praised,
Being silent, speaks for ever. He, whose word
Reverberate made the gloom whereon he gazed
Radiant with sound whose song in his we heard,
Stands far from us as they whose souls he raised
Again, and darkness carolled like a bird.

II

Golden eastern waters rocked the cradle where he slept
Songless, crowned with bays to be of sovereign song,
Breathed upon with balm and calm of bounteous seas that kept
Secret all the blessing of his birthright, strong,

MEMORIAL ODE

Soft, severe, and sweet as dawn when first it laughed and leapt
Forth of heaven, and clove the clouds that wrought it wrong.

Calm and proud and patient even as light that bides its hour
All night long till night wax weary, shone the soul
Crowned and girt with light, sublime in peace and sure in power,
Sunlike, over tidal years and changes; whole,
Full, serene, superb as time that kindles fruit from flower,
Lord alike of waves that rest and waves that roll.

Sunlight round the soft Virgilian meads where sunbeams sleep
Lulled not overlong a spirit of strength to strive
Right against the winds that stormier times heard strain and sweep
Round the rocks whereon man crucified alive
Man, and bade the soul of manhood cower and chant and weep,
Strong in vain to soar and seek, to delve and dive.

III

Time and change and death made music as of
life and strife and doom
When his lyric spell bade ope the graves of
ages dead as dust.
Cain, a shadow like a sunrise clad in fire whose
light was gloom,
Towered above the deepening deluge, crying
on justice held unjust,
Whence his giant sons should find the world
their throne become their tomb,
And a wider world of waters hide the strong-
holds of their trust.

Soiled with desert sand and lit with fire of wrath
from heaven, the seer
Spake for Naboth slain the sentence of the
judgment of the Lord:
Age on ruining age and year as rolling thunder
crashed on year
Down the measures of the mighty song that
glittered like a sword:
Truth and legend strange and fierce as truth or
dreams of faith and fear
Made their lightnings one to crown it, flashed
from stormy chord to chord.

MEMORIAL ODE

Now the lyre whose lord's wise mastery gave its notes reverberate skill
Whence to give again the grace of golden gifts or hands long dead,
Now the deep clear soul that all the lore of time could scarce fulfil,
Now the sovereign voice that spake it, now the radiant eye that read,
Seem to sleep as sleeps the indomitable imperishable will
Here, that haply lives and sleeps not, though its word on earth be said.

1894.

MEMORIAL VERSES ON THE DEATH OF KARL BLIND

ACROSS the wide-wing'd years
Whose sound no hearkener hears
Passing in thunder of reverberate flight,
Nor any seer may see
What fruit of them shall be,
Shines from the death-struck past a living light,
And music breathed of memory's breath
Attunes the darkling silence born of earthly death.

Through all the thunderous time,
Now silent and sublime,
When Right in hopeless hope waged war on Wrong,
His head shone high, his hand
Grasped as a burning brand
The sword of faith which weakness makes more strong,
And they for whom it shines hold fast
The trust that Time bequeaths for truth to assure at last.

Not prison, not the breath
Of doom denouncing death,
Could make the manhood in him burn less high
For one breath's space than when
It shone for following men,
A sign to show how man might live or die
With freedom in triumphant sight,
And hope elate above all fluctuant chance of fight.

The German fame of old,
By Roman hands inscrolled
As bright beyond all nations else borne down,
Shone round his banished head,
As round the deathless dead
With light bequeathed of one coequal crown:
And now that his and theirs are one
No time shall see the setting of that sovereign sun.

All this must all time know
While memories ebb and flow
Till out of blind forgetfulness is born
Fame deathless as the day,
When none may think to say
Her light is less than noon and even and morn:
When glories forged in hell-fire fade,
And warrior empires wither in the waste they made.

When all a forger's fame
Is shrivelled up in shame;
When all imperial notes of praise and prayer
And hoarse thanksgiving raised
To the abject God they praised
For murderous mercies are but poisonous air;
When Bismarck and his William lie
Low even as he they warred on—damned too
deep to die.

For how should history bid
Their names go free, lie hid,
Stand scathless of her Tacitean brand?
From them forgetfulness,
Too bright a boon to bless
Crime deep as hell, withholds her healing hand;
But while their fame was fresh and rank
The old light of German glory here nor sank
nor shrank.

Here, where all wrongs find aid,
Where all foul strengths are stayed,
Where empire means not evil, here was one
Whose glance, whose smile, whose voice
Bade all their souls rejoice
Who hailed in sight of English sea and sun
A head sublime as theirs who died
For England ere her praise was Freedom's
crowning pride.

Not even his head shone higher,
Whose only loftiest lyre
Were meet to hail faith pure and proud as his:
A pride all praise must wrong
Less high than soared the song
Wherein the light that was and was not is:
The lyric light whence Milton lit
The darkness of the darkling days that knew not it.

Less high my praise may soar:
But when it lives no more
Silent and fervent in the secret heart
That holds for all time fast
The sense of time long past,
No sense of life will then therein have part.
No thought may speak, no words enshrine,
My thanks to him who gave Mazzini's hand to mine.

Our glorious century gone
Beheld no head that shone
More clear across the storm, above the foam,
More steadfast in the fight
Of warring night and light,
True to the truth whose star leads heroes home,
Than his who, loving all things free,
Loved as with English passion of delight our sea.

The joy of glorious age
To greet the sea's glad rage
With answering rapture as of bird or boy,
When sundawn thrilled the foam
And bade the sea's flock home,
Crowned all a foiled heroic life with joy
Bright as the light of living flame,
That glows, a deathless gloriole, round his deathless name.

1907.

ODE TO MAZZINI

I

A VOICE comes from the far unsleeping years,
  An echo from the rayless verge of time,
  Harsh, with the gathered weight of kingly crime,
Whose soul is stained with blood and bloodlike tears,
And hearts made hard and blind with endless pain,
  And eyes too dim to bear
  The light of the free air,
And hands no longer restless in the wonted chain,
  And valiant lives worn out
  By silence and the doubt
That comes with hope found weaponless and vain;
  All these cry out to thee,
  As thou to Liberty,
All, looking up to thee, take heart and life again.

II

Too long the world has waited. Year on year
  Has died in voiceless fear .

Since tyranny began the silent ill,
And Slaughter satiates yet her ravenous will.
  Surely the time is near—
  The dawn grows wide and clear;
And fiercer beams than pave the steps of day
  Pierce all the brightening air
  And in some nightly lair
The keen white lightning hungers for his prey,
  Against his chain the growing thunder yearns
  With hot swift pulses all the silence burns,
And the earth hears, and maddens with delay.

III

Dost thou not hear, thro' the hushed heart of night,
The voices wailing for thy help, thy sight,
  The souls, that call their lord?
  "We want the voice, the sword,
We want the hand to strike, the love to share
  The weight we cannot bear;
The soul to point our way, the heart to do and dare.
  We want the unblinded eye,
  The spirit pure and high,
And consecrated by enduring care:
  For now we dare not meet
  The memories of the past;

They wound us with their glories bright and fleet,
The fame that would not last,
The hopes that were too sweet;
A voice of lamentation
Shakes the high places of the thronèd nation,
The crownless nation sitting wan and bare
Upon the royal seat."

IV[1]

Too long the world has waited. Day by day
The noiseless feet of murder pass and stain
Palace and prison, street and loveliest plain,

[1] In the MS., Stanza IV originally began as follows—

"Too long the world has waited. Day by day
Fresh murders ease the thirst of widening sway:
And still their blood who lie without a shroud
Left to the wild bleak air,
As they were slaughter'd there,
Cries from the desolate Apennine aloud.
Father and children lain
A white bleak pile of slain,
Left to the sunlight and the freezing rain.
Thro' blood-polluted halls
Still the king-serpent sprawls
His shiny way athwart the floors defiled;
From that foul nest of sin
His soul sits cowering in
Still creeps and stings his anger blind and wild.
Still from that loathsome lair," etc.

Swinburne evidently cancelled these lines, as being too violent to represent anything that was happening in 1857.

And the slow life of freedom bleeds away.
Still bleached in sun and rain,
Lie the forgotten slain
On bleak slopes of the dismal mountain-range.
Still the wide eagle-wings
Brood o'er the sleep of Kings,
Whose purples shake not in the wind of change.
Still our lost land is beautiful in vain,
Where priests and kings defile with blood and lies
The glory of the inviolable skies;
Still from that loathsome lair
Where crawls the sickening air,
Heavy with poison, stagnant as despair,
Where soul and body moulder in one chain
Of inward-living pain:
From wasted lives, and hopes proved unavailing;
In utterance harsh and strange,
With many a fitful change,
In laughter and in tears,
In triumph and in fears,
The voice of earth goes heavenward for revenge:
And all the children of her dying year
Fill up the unbroken strains
From priestly tongues that scathe with lies and vailing
The Bourbons' murderous dotard, sick of blood,

To the "How-long" of stricken spirits, wailing
Before the throne of God.

V

Austria! The voice is deepening in thine ears
And art thou still asleep,
Drunken with blood and tears!
A murderer's rest should hardly be so deep
Till comes the calm unbroken by the years,
And those, whose life crawls on thro' dying shame,
A thing made up of lies and fears, more vile
Than aught that lives and bears a hateful name
For the crowned serpent, skilled in many a wile,
Charmed with the venomous honey of its guile
The guards until they slept,
And only fawned and crept
Till Fortune gave it leave to sting and smile!
Have not the winds of Heaven and the free waves
A voice to bear the curses of thy slaves
And the loud hatred of the world! O thou
Upon whose shameless brow
The crown is as a brand,
The sceptre trembles in thy trothless hand,
Shrinks not thy soul before the shame it braves,
The gathered anger of a patient land,

The loathing scorn that hardly bears to name
thee?
By all the lies that cannot shame thee,
By all the memories thou must bear
In hushed unspeakable despair;
By the Past that follows thee,
By the Future that shall be
We curse thee by the freedom living still,
We curse thee by the hopes thou canst not kill,
We curse thee in the name of the wronged earth
That gave thy treasons birth.

VI

Out of a court alive with creeping things
A stench has risen to thicken and pollute
The inviolate air of heaven that clad of
yore
Our Italy with light, because these Kings
Gather like wasps about the tainted fruit,
And eat their venomous way into its core,
And soil with hateful hands its golden hue;
Till on the dead branch clings
A festering horror blown with poison-dew;
Then laugh "So Freedom loses her last name
And Italy is shamèd with our shame!"
For blindness holds them still
And lust of craving will:
A mist is on their souls who cannot see

The ominous light, nor hear the fateful sounds;
Who know not of the glory that shall be,
And was, ere Austria loosed her winged hounds
These double-beak'd and bloody-plumaged things,
Whose shadow is the hiding-place of kings.

VII

Behold, even they whose shade is black around,
Whose names make dumb the nations in their hate,
Tremble to other tyrants; Naples bows
Aghast, and Austria cowers like a scourged hound
Before the priestly hunters: 'tis their fate,
Whose fear is as a brand-mark on men's brows,
Themselves to shrink beneath a fiercer dread;
The might of ancient error
Round royal spirits folds its shroud of terror,
And at a name the imperial soul is dead.
Rome! as from thee the primal curse came forth
So comes the retribution:
As the flushed murderers of the ravening north
Crouch for thine absolution.
Exalt thyself, that love or fear of thee

Hath shamed thine Austrian bondsmen, and
their shame
Avenges the vext spirits of the free,
Repays the trustless lips, the bloody hands,
And all the sin that makes the Austrian name
A bye-word among liars—fit to be
Thy herald, Rome, among the wasted lands!

VIII

For wheresoe'er thou lookest, death is there,
And a slow curse that stains the sacred air:
Such as must hound Italia till she learn
Whereon to lean the weight of reverent
trust
Learn to see God within her, and not bare
Her glories to the ravenous eyes of lust;
Vain of dishonour that proclaims her fair.
Such insolence of listless pride must earn
The scourge of Austria—till mischance in
turn
Defile her eagles with fresh blood and dust.
For tho' the faint heart burn
In silence: yet a sullen flame is there
Which yet may leap into the sunless air
And gather in the embrace of its wide wings
The shining spoil of kings.

IX

But now the curse lies heavy. Where art thou,
Our Italy, among all these laid low

ODE TO MAZZINI

Too powerless or too desperate to speak—
Thou, robed in purple for a priestly show,
Thou, buffeted and stricken, blind and weak!
Doth not remembrance light thine utter woe?
Thine eyes beyond this Calvary look, altho'
Brute-handed Austria smite thee on the cheek
And her thorns pierce thy forehead, white and meek;
In lurid mist half-strangled sunbeams pine,
Yet purer than the flame of tainted altars;
And tho' thy weak hope falters,
It clings not to the desecrated shrine.
Tho' thy blank eyes look wanly thro' dull tears,
And thy weak soul is heavy with blind fears,
Yet art thou greater than thy sorrow is,
Yet is thy spirit nobler than of yore,
Knowing the keys thy reverence used to kiss
Were forged for emperors to bow down before,
Not for free men to worship: So that Faith,
Blind portress of the gate which opens death,
Shall never prate of Freedom any more;
For on a priest's tongue such a word is strange,
And when they laud who did but now revile,
Shall we believe? Rome's lying lips defile
The graves of heroes, giving us in change
Enough of Saints and Bourbons. Dare ye now
Receive her who speaks pleasant words and bland

And stretches out the blessing of her hand
  While the pure blood of freemen stains her
                brow?
O dream not of such reconcilement! Be
  At least in spirit free
When the great sunrise floods your glorious land.

X

  For yet the dawn is lingering white and far,
  And dim its guiding star;
There is a sorrow in the speechless air,
And in the sunlight a dull painful glare;
  The winds, that fold around
  That soft enchanted ground
Their wings of music, sadden into song;
  The holy stars await
  Some dawn of glimmering fate
In silence—but the time of pain seems long,
  But here no comfort stills
This sorrow that o'erclouds the purple hills.

XI

The sun is bright, and fair the foamless sea;
The winds are loud with light and liberty:
  But when shall these be free?
These hearts that beat thro' stifled pain, these
                eyes
Strained thro' dim prison-air toward the free
                skies:
  When shall their light arise?

ODE TO MAZZINI

XII

Thou! whose best name on earth
Is Love—whose fairest birth
The freedom of the fair world thou hast made;
Whose light in Heaven is life,
Whose rest above our strife—
Whose bright sky overvaults earth's barren shade;
Who hearest all ere this weak prayer can rise,
Before whose viewless eyes
Unrolled and far the starry future lies;
Behold what men have done,
What is beneath thy sun—
What stains the sceptred hand, sin lifts to thee
In prayer-like mockery—
What binds the heart Thou madest to be free.
Since we are blind, give light—
Since we are feeble, smite—
How long shall man be scornful in thy sight,
"Fear not—He cares not, or He does not see?"

XIII

We keep our trust tho' all things fail us—
Tho' Time nor baffled Hope avail us,
We keep our faith—God liveth and is love.
Not one groan rises there
Tho' choked in dungeon air
But He has heard it though no thunders move—
And though no help is here,

No royal oath, no Austrian lie,
But echoes in the listening sky;
We know not, yet perchance His wide reply
is near.
Ah, let no sloth delay,
No discord mar its way,
Keep wide the entrance for that Hope divine;
Truth never wanted swords,
Since with his swordlike words
Savonarola smote the Florentine.
Even here she is not weaponless, but waits
Silent at the palace gates,
Her wide eyes kindling eastward to the far sun-
shine.
When out of Naples came a tortured voice:
Whereat the whole earth shuddered, and
forbade
The murderous smile on lying lips to fade;
The murderous heart in silence to rejoice;
She also smiled—no royal smile—as knowing
Some stains of sloth washed by the blood then
flowing;
Their lives went out in darkness—not in
vain;
Earth cannot hear, and sink to bloodless rest
again.
And if indeed her waking strength shall
prove

Worthy the dreams that passing lit her sleep,
Who then shall lift such eyes of triumph, who
Respond with echoes of a louder love
Than Cromwell's England? let fresh praise renew
The wan brow's withered laurels with its dew,
And one triumphal peace the crownèd earth shall keep.

XIV

As one who dreaming on some cloud-white peak
Hears the loud wind sail past him far and free,
And the faint music of the misty sea,
Listening till all his life reels blind and weak;
So discrownèd Italy
With the world's hope in her hands
Ever yearning to get free,
Silent between the past and future stands.
Dim grows the past, and dull,
All that was beautiful,
As scattered stars drawn down the moonless night:
And the blind eyes of Scorn
Are smitten by strange morn,
And many-thronèd treason wastes before its might:

And every sunless cave
And time-forgotten grave
Is pierced with one intolerable light.
Not one can Falsehood save
Of all the crowns she gave,
But the dead years renew their old delight.
The worshipped evil wanes
Through all its godless fanes,
And falters from its long imperial height,
As the last altar-flame
Dies with a glorious nation's dying shame.

XV

And when that final triumph-time shall be,
Whose memory shall be kept
First of the souls that slept
In death ere light was on their Italy?
Or which of men more dear than thee
To equal-thoughted liberty,
Whom here on earth such reverence meets.
Such love from Heaven's pure children greets
As few dare win among the free!
Such honour ever follows thee
In peril, banishment, and blame,
And all the loud blind world calls shame,
Lives, and shall live, thy glorious name,
Tho' death, that scorns the robèd slave,
Embrace thee, and a chainless grave.

While thou livest, there is one
Free in soul beneath the sun:
And thine out-laboured heart shall be
In death more honoured—not more free.

XVI

And men despond around thee; and thy name
The tyrant smiles at, and his priests look pale;
And weariness of empty-throated fame,
And men who live and fear all things but shame,
Comes on thee; and the weight of aimless years
Whose light is dim with tears:
And hope dies out like a forgotten tale.
O brother, crownèd among men—O chief
In glory as in grief!
O throned by sorrow over time and fate
And the blind strength of hate!
From soul to answering soul
The thunder-echoes roll,
And truth grows out of suffering still and great.
To have done well is victory,—to be true
Is truest guerdon, though blind hands undo
The work begun too late.
God gives to each man power by toil to earn
An undishonoured grave:
The praise that lives on every name in turn
He leaves the laurelled slave.

We die, but freedom dies not like the power
That changes with the many-sided hour.
Though trampled under the brute hoofs of crime,
She sees thro' tears and blood,
Above the stars and in the night of time,
The sleepless watch of God;
Past fear and pain and errors wide and strange
The veil'd years leading wingless-footed Change;
Endure, and they shall give
Truth and the law whereby men work and live.

XVII

From Ischia to the loneliest Apennine
Time's awful voice is blown;
And from her clouded throne
Freedom looks out and knows herself divine.
From walls that keep in shame
Poerio's martyr-name,
From wild rocks foul with children's blood, it rings;
Their murderers gaze aghast
Through all the hideous past,
And fate is heavy on the souls of kings.
No more their hateful sway
Pollutes the equal day,
Nor stricken truth pales under its wide wings,

ODE TO MAZZINI

Even when the awakened people speaks in wrath,
Wrong shall not answer wrong with blind impatience;
The bloody slime upon that royal path
Makes slippery standing for the feet of nations.
Our freedom's bridal robe no wrong shall stain,
No lie shall taint her speech:
But equal knowledge shall be born of pain,
And wisdom shaping each.
True leaders shall be with us, nobler laws
Shall guide us calmly to the final Cause:
And thou, earth's crownless queen,
No more shalt wail unseen,
But front the weary ages without pain:
Time shall bring back for thee
The hopes that lead the free,
And thy name fill the charmèd world again.
The shame that stains thy brow
Shall not for ever mark thee to fresh fears:
For in the far light of the buried years
Shines the undarkened future that shall be
A dawn o'er sunless ages. Hearest thou,
Italia? tho' deaf sloth hath sealed thine ears,
The world has heard thy children—and God hears.



PARODIES



DISGUST:

A DRAMATIC MONOLOGUE [1]

A woman and her husband, having been converted from free thought to Calvinism, and being utterly miserable in consequence, resolve to end themselves by poison. The man dies, but the woman is rescued by application of the stomach-pump.—[A. C. S.]

I

PILLS? talk to me of your pills? Well, that, I must say, is cool.
Can't bring my old man round? he was always a stubborn old fool.
If I hadn't taken precautions—a warning to all that wive—
He might not have been dead, and I might not have been alive.

II

You would like to know, if I please, how it was that our troubles began?
You see, we were brought up Agnostics, I and my poor old man.

[1] A parody of Tennyson's *Despair*.

And we got some idea of selection and evolution,
you know—
Professor Huxley's doing—where does he expect
to go!

III

Well, then came trouble on trouble on trouble—
I may say, a peck—
And his cousin was wanted one day on the
charge of forging a cheque—
And his puppy died of the mange—my parrot
choked on its perch.
This was the consequence was it, of not going
weekly to church?

IV

So we felt that the best if not only thing that
remained to be done
On an earth everlastingly moving about a per-
petual sun,
Where worms breed worms to be eaten of worms
that have eaten their betters—
And reviewers are barely civil—and people get
spiteful letters—
And a famous man is forgot ere the minute
hand can tick nine—
Was to send in our P. P. C., and purchase a
packet of strychnine.

V

Nay—but first we thought it was rational—only fair—
To give both parties a hearing—and went to the meeting-house there,
At the curve of the street that runs from the Stag to the old Blue Lion.
"Little Zion" they call it—a deal more "little" than "Zion."

VI

And the preacher preached from the text, "Come out of her." Hadn't we come?
And we thought of the shepherd in Pickwick—and fancied a flavour of rum
Balmily borne on the wind of his words—and my man said, "Well,
Let's get out of this, my dear—for his text has a brimstone smell."

VII

So we went, O God, out of chapel—and gazed, ah God, at the sea.
And I said nothing to him. And he said nothing to me.

VIII

And there, you see, was an end of it all. It was obvious, in fact,
That, whether or not you believe in the doctrine taught in a tract,

Life was not in the least worth living. Because,
don't you see?
Nothing that can't be, can, and what must be,
must. Q. E. D.
And the infinitesimal sources of Infinite Uni-
deality
Curve in to the central abyss of a sort of a queer
Personality
Whose refraction is felt in the nebulæ strewn in
the pathway of Mars
Like the parings of nails Æonian—clippings and
snippings of stars—
Shavings of suns that revolve and evolve and
involve and at times
Give a sweet astronomical twang to remarkably
hobbling rhymes.

IX

And the sea curved in with a moan—and we
thought how once—before
We fell out with those atheist lecturers—once,
ah, once and no more,
We read together, while midnight blazed like
the Yankee flag,
A reverend gentleman's work—the Conversion
of Colonel Quagg.
And out of its pages we gathered this lesson of
doctrine pure—

DISGUST

Zephaniah Stockdolloger's gospel—a word that
deserves to endure
Infinite millions on millions of infinite Æons to
come—
"Vocation," says he, "is vocation, and duty duty.
Some."

X

And duty, said I, distinctly points out—and
vocation, said he,
Demands as distinctly—that I should kill you,
and that you should kill me.
The reason is obvious—we cannot exist without
creeds—who can?
So we went to the chemist's—a highly respect-
able church-going man—
And bought two packets of poison. You
wouldn't have done so?—Wait.
It's evident, Providence is not with you, ma'am,
the same thing as Fate.
Unconscious cerebration educes God from a fog,
But spell God backwards, what then? Give it
up? the answer is, dog.
(I don't exactly see how this last verse is to scan,
But that's a consideration I leave to the secular
man.)

XI

I meant of course to go with him—as far as I
pleased—but first
To see how my old man liked it—I thought
perhaps he might burst.
I didn't wish it—but still it's a blessed release
for a wife—
And he saw that I thought so—and grinned in
derision—and threatened my life
If I made wry faces—and so I took just a sip—
and he—
Well—you know how it ended—he didn't get
over me.

XII

Terrible, isn't it? Still, on reflection, it might
have been worse.
He might have been the unhappy survivor, and
followed my hearse.
"Never do it again?" Why certainly not. You
don't
Suppose I should think of it, surely? But any-
how—there—I won't.



THE GHOST OF IT[1]

IN my poems, with ravishing rapture,
  Storm strikes me, and strokes me, and stings;
But I'm scarcely the bird you might capture
  Out of doors in the thick of such things.
I prefer to be well out of harm's way,
  When tempest makes tremble the tree,
And the wind with armipotent arm-sway
    Makes soap of the sea.

Hanging hard on the rent rags of others
  Who before me did better, I try
To believe them my sisters and brothers,
  Though I know what a low lot am I.
Truth dawns on time's resonant ruin
  Frank, fulminant, fragrant and free,
And apparently this is the doing
    Of wind on the sea.

[1] This parody of a chorus in *By the North Sea,* was written in 1880, and was originally intended to occupy a position in *Heptalogia,* published in that year. It was, however, ultimately discarded in favour of *Nephelidia.*

Fame flutters in front of pretension
  Whose flag-staff is flagrantly fine,
And it cannot be needful to mention
  That such beyond question is mine.
It's plain as a newspaper leader
  That a rhymester who scribbles like me
May feel perfectly sure that his reader
    Is sick of the sea.[1]

[1] Upon the reverse of one of the leaves of the Manuscript of *By the North Sea* Swinburne has written these last four lines and headed them "The Ghost of it."